Friday, September 12, 2008 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 279 P18 www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THE ROUTE TO THE PRESIDENCY A portion of the 2.1-km C-5 Extension in Parañaque City which has been the subject of a heated back and forth among senators who are now divided along party lines and presidential intentions due in the main to the suspected big-time beneficiaries for its right-of-way compensations. BW.MONA

Manna for Velarde, Villar

Gas price going down, pan de sal going up

By Abigail L. Ho and Michael Lim Ubac

THE COST OF FUEL IS GOING DOWN at the pump, but the over-the-counter price of bread is likely to go up, reflecting differing reactions to international market adjustments.

Local oil firms have reduced gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by P2 a liter, as world oil prices continued to soften.

Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. slashed prices of its gasoline products by P3 a liter and of diesel and kerosene by P2 a liter at 10 p.m. yesterday.

GAS PRICE A10

FINALLY, RELIEF A child sits in line with other displaced Moro residents from the far-flung villages of Maraasacoc, Data Piang and Data Saudi towns in Maguindanao. The head of the local chapter of the Red Cross says that since the start of Ramadan, the Muslims' holy month, the hostilities have eased somewhat allowing relief agencies to speed up their operations. AFP

But Bro. Mike says his realty firm has not been paid yet

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE C-5 ROAD EXTENSION project has proved to be real manna not from heaven but from the government for Bro. Mike Velarde, the leader of the El Shaddai charismatic group, whose Amvel Land Corp. reportedly obtained a windfall from selling the right-of-way over its Parañaque property for the road improvement project.

Several employees from Amvel's head office and sales department confirmed to the Inquirer that part of the Amvel property was indeed acquired by the government for the construction of the 2.1-km C-5 road extension between Multinational Village and the SM Sucat mall.

The employees could not confirm, however, how much right-of-way compensation was paid to Amvel whose Amvel Members, a medium-rise condominium on a 13-hectare development in the area, received an immediate financial boost from the state-funded road project.

PANIMA A11

Kim undergoes brain surgery; Seoul on alert

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—SOUTH KOREA was on alert Thursday for possible political change in its nuclear-armed neighbor following the disclosure that longtime North Korean leader Kim Jong-il had suffered a stroke.

South Korean Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee, who told parliament Kim had undergone surgery but was recovering, said a military plan was being drawn up for any contingency.

He said South Korea was advancing its existing contingency plan to pre-

KIM UNDERGOES A10

Traders give soldiers fresh tuna, 'pasa load'

By Nikko Dizon and TJ Burgonio

TROOPS BATTLING MORO REBELS are getting all sorts of morale-boosting supplies—from fresh tuna to "pasa load" and toiletries. But little badly needed assistance is going to camps sheltering civilians displaced by the months-long fighting in Mindanao.

This contrast was provided yesterday by the military and a group of 17 evacuees flown to Manila by organizations concerned over the human cost of the fighting between government troops and guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres Jr., spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, told reporters that supplies were coming from all over Mindanao in support of the troops conducting operations against Ameril Umbra Kato and Abdullah Macapaar.

The two MILF commanders staged attacks on towns in North Cotabato and Lanao del Norte last month, shooting and hacking to death scores of civilians, including women and children. The MILF said Kato and Macapaar were op-

TRADERS A10

Scientists: To avoid heart disease, brush your teeth

PARIS—HERE'S ANOTHER REASON to brush your teeth: Poor dental hygiene boosts the risk of heart attacks and strokes, a pair of studies reported this week.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide, claiming upward of 17 million lives every year, according to the World Health Organization.

Smoking, obesity and high choles-

SCIENTISTS A10

COURT OF APPEALS SCANDAL

SC urged to probe FG, GSIS lawyers

By Leila B. Salaverria

A GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURance System trustee, who happens to be the lawyer of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, and the petition fund's chief legal counsel should be investigated by the Supreme Court for their roles in the Court of Appeals controversy stemming from the Meralco case, lawyer Francisco Chavez said yesterday.

If found to have committed lapses, GSIS trustee Jesus Santos and chief counsel Estrella Elamparo should be penalized as well, said Chavez, chair of the lawyers' group Operation Clean Hands Inc., which combats corruption.

Noting that Santos and Elamparo occupied counsel in the Supreme Court decision dismissing appellate court Justice Vicente Roxas from the judiciary, penalizing three others and admonishing a fifth, Chavez said the role of the two GSIS officials in the scandal should also be addressed.

"The Supreme Court could be moving on the right track should it request them to explain why no disciplinary action should be filed against them... The Supreme Court can act even prejudice [on its own initiative] and its Office of the Court Administrator can act on it," Chavez told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

He pointed out that based on a three-member panel's investigation of the Court of Appeals controversy, Justice

SC URGED A10

PCGG chair says he won't quit even if he's disbarred

By Norman Bordadora

CAMILO SABIO, CHAIR OF THE Presidential Commission on Good Government, intends to stay on in his post even if the Supreme Court disbars him.

Sabio said one need not be a lawyer to be PCGG chair. "So even if

PCGG A17

Thoughts on the Sabio brothers in SC decision

By Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez

(The author served as associate justice of the Supreme Court from 2000 up to her retirement on Feb. 27, 2008. She was a justice of the Court of Appeals from 1991 to 2000. A law graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas, Gutierrez was also an MTC and RTC judge in Manila.)

COMMENTARY

THE FIASCO INVOLVING several members of the Court of Appeals relative to the Meralco-GSIS case is one of the saddest chapters in the history of that court. The events that transpired before the panel of investigators composed of three retired Supreme Court justices brought deep maladroits on the entire judiciary.

The Supreme Court, in its decision, adopted the findings of fact by the panel of investigators, discussed the respective liabilities of those concerned, and resolved to penalize them. With due respect to my former colleagues, I would like to pass the following observations:

1. In its decision (par. 2, pp. 46-48), the Supreme Court held:

"[We] see do find that it was improper for Justice Sabio Jr. to hold on to the chairmanship of the Ninth Divi-

THOUGHTS A17

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: The Tuburan Group of Islands will have strong weather while the Babuyan and Calayan Islands will experience rains and gusty winds.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Legaspi	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Naga	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cuyo	Partly Cloudy
Iloilo	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Kalibo	Cloudy with Rains	San Jose	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Catarman	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy
Cubao	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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'Hot money' flowing back to RP

Drop in oil prices triggers return of foreign investments

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOREIGN "HOT MONEY" HAS flowed back into local stocks, bonds and bank products over the last two months as global oil prices retreated from record highs.

Based on the latest Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas report, the country captured $147.5 million in net foreign portfolio investments in August, up from the $103.2 million-net recorded in July.

The last two months thus marked a reversal of the large outflows seen since March this year, when an inflation scare broke out across the region given the upsurge in global food and fuel prices.

"The softening of global oil prices was a major contributory factor to the more favorable investor sentiment during the month. Strong flow-turnover earning results of several corporations have also positively influenced foreign investors," said BSP Governor Amando Tetangco in a press statement.

Foreign portfolio investments in stocks, bonds and bank products are called "hot money" due to their volatile nature.

For the month of August alone, foreign portfolio investments registered with the central bank aggregated $740.5 million, 72 percent of which went to shares listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Oil bubble bursts

Investments in peso-denominated government securities and in peso bank deposits accounted for 26 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

On the other hand, capital repatriations amounted to $593 million and were mainly in withdrawals of investments in PSE-listed shares (42 percent), government securities (22 percent), and peso bank deposits and money market instruments (combined 36 percent).

After oil prices based on the light sweet crude or WTI benchmark fell past $113 per barrel in recent days, down from a record high of over $147 per barrel the past months, many analysts proclaimed the commodity price bubble may have burst.

Aside from the downtrend in oil prices, investors have also taken comfort in the BSP's tougher stance against inflation in recent months. From June to August this year, the central bank jacked up its benchmark interest rates by a total of 100 basis points, with the overnight borrowing rate now at 6 percent.

When the inflation rate is on the rise, central banks tend to tighten monetary policy—such as by raising interest rates or the required reserves that banks must place in low-yielding reserves—in order to curb business and consumer spending that may further fuel inflation.

Because of the net outflows from March to June, the eighteenth portfolio tally still showed a negative net outflow of $289.5 billion versus the hefty inflows of $3.36 billion recorded in the same period last year.

The United Kingdom, Singapore and United States were the top three investor countries, contributing 68 percent of investments funds during the January to August period.

The report is based on the amount of foreign portfolio investments registered with the BSP-Registration of foreign investments with the central bank enables the investor to buy foreign exchange from the banking system for capital repatriation and remittance of dividends/earnings from the investments.

Lito Lapid off the hook

By Jocelyn R. Uy

LAPID: to do with the preparation of the second deed of sale dated Dec. 17, 1997, for the reduced amount of ₱5 million, and the best evidence is the document itself which only bears the signature of accused Miranda," the resolution said.

The other respondents in the case are Boni Pacunayo, Provincial Treasurer Jovito Salinda, Leoniminda Soriano, chief, assessment division of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and Int. clerk, Ms. Lorna San Antonio.

The Ombudsman also upheld Lapid's authority to approve the sale of the same property to RightWin International Corp. for ₱5.45-5 million four years later, acknowledging that the provincial government made ₱95 million from the transaction.

Complainant Cielo Macapagal-Salgado had accused Lapid of causing the government undue injury by entering into a deed of absolute sale when he had no authority to do so and when he paid the seller ₱10 million even if the supposed certificate had not yet been executed.

Macapagal-Salgado, half-sister of President Macapagal-Arroyo, also said Lapid had no authority to use the ₱5.86 million cash deposit the provincial government had in the Philippine National Bank as security for the ₱95 million payment it obtained from another bank.

The Ombudsman, however, ruled Lapid's actions were covered by a resolution passed by the provincial board.

DepEd defends budget

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION yesterday presented to the House of Representatives the details of its P307.9-billion budget—the highest allocation for any department in the 2009 proposed budget.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus told the House committee that among its crucial needs remain the construction of school buildings, the repair of classrooms, the repair of water and sanitation facilities, additional teaching positions, school furniture and siding of school sites.

"A well-educated child may be scarlyfor an illiterate child is sure expensive," Lapus said before the House committee on appropriations.

Lapus said the department has yet to meet the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Office's standards for education spending even with the huge allocation.

"It's still not adequate," he said to underline the need for more funding to meet the country's education needs.

Lapus said Unesco set the standard of a country's education budget at 6 percent of its gross national product.

He said that over the past few years the country had yet to go beyond a little more than 2.3 percent of the GDP in allocating resources for education.

Lapus, a former congressman from Tarlac, was grilled by his former colleagues in the House as he presented the DepEd budget, accomplishments and challenges on his birthday yesterday.

Earlier presenting the House panel chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua suspended the hearing of the Department of Agriculture's P28.7-billion budget.

The lawmakers moved for the deferment after some of their questions were left unanswered by the department officials.

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Ateneo de Zambo alumni election

THE ATENEO DE ZAMBOANGA UNIVERSITY Alumni Manila Alumni Association will elect its new board of directors during its general meeting on Sept. 27 at the Archipelago Building, North Avenue, Quezon City.

Registration starts at 3 p.m. and election at 4 p.m. Merienda will be served.

ADDAWA pioneer Jhel Ok she announced the holding of a sports fun run Oct. 4 at the Cubao Sports Plaza across at #39 Pio Quezon City.

For details, contact the Secretariat at 5260656, Atty. Gene Dawaja 8917-5285960, Nando Bunay 0916-9978999, Jimmy Pangandaan 0916-9002158 or Atty. Cesar Basan 0917-8103023 or Jhel Hernandez at 0917-9760670.

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SC ruling on Neri imperils media, watchdog warns

A MEDIA FREEDOM watchdog yesterday said that the Supreme Court's affirmation of its March 25 decision in favor of executive privilege undermined the public interest function of the press to provide information as a citizenry that has a right to it on matters of public concern.

Reporters Without Borders said the decision of the high court "is a serious step backward for freedom of information in the Philippines."

The group called on the tenth-ruling administration to give a democracy and vital to a sovereign people's capacity to hold governments accountable," the CMFR said.

The group called on its colleagues in the press to transcend through positive duels both vigilant and responsible for limits the Supreme Court decision has imposed on the public's right to information.

By expanding the coverage of executive privilege to include communications received or solicited and received by a presidential adviser, in this case Romulo Neri, then chairman general of the National Economic and Development Authority, the Supreme Court has legitimized government secrecy to an extent yet to be established by practice, the group said.

The CMFR said the tethered "idea of ... broad that executive privilege includes information on presidential decisions as well as the materials that were discussed prior to those decisions, thus enabling the president and/or his/her advisers to use executive privilege to conceal information on corruption and other forms of official wrongdoing from the Senate, the press and the public.

Right to know

"The impact on the public's right to know and on the basic responsibility of the press to provide such information is obvious. But it is equally relevant to the health and future of democracy.

"If such information can be obtained because of executive privilege, then no information vital to the exercise of the sovereign right of the people to democratically to decide on policy and other government actions can be made available," it said.

The CMFR said the decision was solidly on conflict with the impending passage of a bill on public and press access to government information.

The court decision strikes at the heart of the imperative for transparency in the affairs of a government in which sovereignty has an unquestioned that it uses all force it from top to bottom, according to the group.

Anti-corruption

"Vital to the fight against corruption, transparency is the only weapon available to citizens to ensure honesty in government. By in effect providing the legal basis for the de facto covering of that policy, the court has made that fight even more difficult and problematic.

"To treat the challenged power by the exemption of executive privilege, journalists will have to exert greater efforts to get at the nuts of government transactions, policies and actions. As in the dying days of the Marcos regime, the newsroom of the house is for a journalism firmly committed to the truth-telling necessary in a democracy and vital to a sovereign people's capacity to hold governments accountable," the CMFR said.

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Driver eyed as main target in ambush on gov

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE ARE DELVING INTO THE life of the driver of Misamis Occidental Governor Loreto Leo Ocampos Ocampos as they search for a possible motive behind the gun attack which wounded the governor last week.

Colonel Investigation and Detective Group-National Capital Region (CIDG-NCR) chief Senior Supt. Erickson Velasquez told reporters in Camp Crame that for now, investigators could not see any evidence to conclude that politics-stopping into-violence might be the reason for the ambush of the Ocampos vehicle in Pasay City on Sept. 3.

Consequently, Velasquez said, investigators were looking at any previous threats on the life of the governor's driver, Albert Patrias.

"We are looking at the personal life of the driver to see if there was any incident in the past where he was threatened. Maybe the governor was just a 'collateral damage,'" Velasquez said.

He added that the police had been evaluating Ocampos' political life, past and present. "Unfortunately we can't establish any link between the incident and his political problems," he said.

"We know that he parted ways with Misamis Rep. Cedric Diaz. But is this enough to have him (Ocampos) killed? The police are looking at all of these," Velasquez said.

Diaz has himself survived a shooting ambush in Batasan before the 2007 elections.

Velasquez also pointed out that cases filed by Ocampos against his predecessor, former Gov. Vicente Gaite, also caused a rift between the two.

Ocampos was on board his Pajero van early morning on Sept. 3 on his way to the airport from his home in Parañaque City when still unidentified men opened fire at the vehicle near the exit of the Montilla Village.

Ocampos sustained bullet wounds in the neck and left shoulder while Patrias, 32, was wounded in the face and head.

The governor's 27-year-old son, Dominic, who was in the second row seat of the Pajero, took no hurt in the shooting, police said.

LTO hoping new licenses will not fade

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE LAND TRANSPORTATION Office (LTO) on Thursday said it would find out the extent to counterfeit drivers licenses within the year and hoped the bidder would top technology that would prevent the cards from being faked in their plastic jackets.

LTO chief Assistant Transportation Secretary Alberto Suansing said at a press conference yesterday that the contract with the assured provider, Amalgamated Macros of the Philippines (Amaph) had ended, and the company was concentrating on replacing faded licenses.

Amaph started applying an additional protective overlay to the driver's licenses it supplied beginning in March 2006, to further protect the documents at no additional cost to the public, Suansing said.

He said AMPI also managed to cut down the processing time for card renewals from nine months to a mere 20 minutes.

Motorists only need to surrender their faded licenses to the LTO to get a replacement, Suansing said, adding that AMPI was shouldering the cost of replacements, not the LTO.

"It is also worth noting the real reason some drivers' licenses fade is because Filipinos like to cover their cards and other things with plastic," Suansing said.

"Imagine the license being covered with a plastic jacket and then placed in a wallet that is kept in the back pocket. It gets sweat, so the ink inside to the plastic," he said.

According to the LTO, the technology used to make driver's licenses in the Philippines is the same one used in the US, Canada, Australia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and Australia, among other. Plus World countries.

But those licenses do not fade because their holders do not place them in plastic jackets, Suansing said.

Still, the number of faded licenses is "less than 9,000 percent" of the nine of thousands issued in 2005 and 2006, saying the dye sublimation thermal transfer technology, he said.

Suansing said the win why he was surprised the "old issue" of fading licenses was being canvassed by certain groups.

Suansing's advice to license holders?

Do not keep your license in a plastic jacket. Biodegradable plastic to cover drivers licenses, passports, books, sofas and chairs, among other things.

Favila: Cha-cha good for economy

By Michael Lim Ubac

TAKING SKEPTICS TACK, A member of President Macapagal-Arroyo's inner circle said yesterday Charter change (Cha-cha) was necessary to enhance the competitiveness of the economy.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila, speaking at a Palace press conference, said he was supportive of moves to change the Constitution, particularly its economic provisions.

"We have to amend the economic provisions (such as on) foreign ownership," said Favila, echoing the statement he made to members of Congress during hearings on the Department of Trade and Industry budget early this week.

His statement also comes in the wake of the emergency meeting of the National Competitiveness Council President Arroyo called on Monday to discuss the latest "Going Business 2006" report of the World Bank and the International Finance Corp.

In the report, the Philippines slipped four notches to No. 140 from last year's No. 136 on the list of economies it says most conducive to do business in.

The country's dismal performance was attributed mainly to the lack of follow-through when it came to reforms, having instituted only one of a possible 10 reforms that report covered.

"A change in the Constitution, (especially in the) economic provisions, will enhance competitiveness," Favila said, pointing out that "terms of economic freedom" in the country and the rest of Southeast Asia were a major concern even in negotiations with the World Trade Organization.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, September 15, 2006
23rd Week in Ordinary Time
Holy Sorrowful Mary

1 Cor 9:16-19, 22b-27
Lk 6:39-42

Said Jesus offered this example, "Can a blind person lead another blind person? Surely both will fall into a ditch. A disciple is not above the master, but when fully trained, he will be like the master. So why do you pay attention to the speck in your brother's eye while you have a log in your eye and are not conscious of it? How can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself cannot see the log in your own? You hypocrite! First remove the log from your own eye and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your neighbor's eye."

Commentary:

We are encouraged to look on Judge within our heart to recognize our imperfections, our mistakes, our sins. In fact, the Church invites us to make an examination of conscience every evening before going to bed. We do well, at the close of each day, to think about what we have done and what we have failed to do in living our faith, and to express humbly our sorrow for the sins we have committed.

Humility of heart and honesty with self are keys to growing in holiness. Humility and honesty are also essential in forming strong, healthy relationships with others.

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MAKATI

Warrants for arrest of 2 Mindoro solons ready

By Alcuin Papa

THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION and Detection Group (CIDG) is getting ready to serve arrest warrants to avoid against two Mindoro congressmen found guilty of graft.

Supt. Edwin Diocos, chief of the CIDG's Investigation Division, said he received the warrants for the arrest of Oriental Mindoro representative Rodolfo Valencia and Alfonso Umali Jr., at around 4:30 p.m. Wednesday from the Sandiganbayan (Anti-Graft) office.

"I have already relieved the warrants to our operating units for implementation," Diocos told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Diocos explained that the warrants would be served to the "given addresses" of the congressmen by regional units of the CIDG.

On Wednesday, the Sandiganbayan issued the warrants for Umali and Valencia, who were recently found guilty of graft for misusing P2.5 million in public funds almost 10 years ago.

The antigraft court sentenced the two congressmen up to 20 years imprisonment and perpetual disqualification from holding public office.

Lucio Tan held hostage by PCGG incompetence, lawyer laments

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TYCOON LUCIO TAN'S LAWYER ESTELITO Mendoza said yesterday the government was holding his client and other defendants in the Marcos case being sued in the Sandiganbayan hostage with its incompetence.

In the absence yet again of lawyer Ma. Lutgarda Narvasa, the prosecutor called to the witness stand the chief of the civil litigation division of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to testify on how the US Customs Service had failed to turn over to the PCGG documents that would prove the bulk of Tan's forex holdings) to the Marcos family.

The witness, lawyer Ma. Luisa Saavedra, elaborated on the years the PCGG attempted to retrieve the documents.

"Stories about efforts to recover these documents are irrelevant and a waste of time," said Mendoza, during yesterday's proceedings in the Fifth Division.

"The [prosecution] should prove first the execution of the documents ... we don't even know what these documents are," he said.

Deeds of assignment

According to the PCGG, the elusive documents were the original copies of the deeds of assignment, showing how the assets of the late Ferdinand Marcos and Tan were pinned to Shareholdings Inc., a holding company for all the companies controlled by Tan.

The companies include Fortune Tobacco Corp., Asia Brewery Inc., Allied Banking Corp., Foremost Farms, Himmel Industries Inc., Hemilagan Development Corp., Silangan Holdings Inc. and Dominium Realty and Construction Corp.

Jacob Sorra Rep. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. showed photocopies of the documents when he testified in the Sandiganbayan last year.

The Marcos son said the original documents were confiscated by US authorities from the family's upon their arrival at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii, on Feb. 26, 1986.

The court had ruled earlier that the prosecution should present the original documents, or establish secondary evidence before the young Marcos' testimony pertaining to the documents could be admitted in court.

In September 1990, the PCGG wrote the US Customs Service asking for the original documents, to no avail.

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Businessman refutes P100-M estafa case

By Leila B. Salaverria

BUSINESSMAN CESAR QUIAMBAO HAS contested the P100 million estafa complaint filed against him by the highway-development firm Infrastructure Development Corp. (IDC).

In a statement, Quiambao, the former chair of the IDC Board of Directors, said the charges against him were just a rehash of a similar case earlier dismissed by the Pasig City prosecutor's office.

The Court of Appeals recently allowed the continued prosecution of Quiambao before the Pasig regional trial court for two estafa charges filed by an IDC official as it denied his plea to postpone the proceedings while he continues his habeas corpus petition before the Department of Justice.

"These charges are old ones that have been refashioned and have already been dismissed due to lack of evidence and the absence of the key elements that constitute estafa," Quiambao's spokesperson Gino Dino said.

Quiambao was accused of defrauding IDC of P93 million and P33 million in two separate instances.

Dino also said that the estafa charges were discredited because the complainant in the cases, IDC's Louie Tiargo, allegedly admitted to Quiambao that he was only forced to sign the complaint.

"Mr. Tiargo sent several text messages to Mr. Quiambao stating in clear terms that he was pressured to sign the complaint or face severe consequences," Dino said.

He added that the charges against Quiambao were intended to destroy the latter's credibility and take away attention from the syndicated estafa case filed against IDC officers for allegedly illegally transferring shares of stock of Jimenez to IDC to set IDC incorporator

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PNP recruiting 300 policewomen

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police (PNP) is recruiting 300 more policewomen to beef up its women and children's desks and as part of the PNP's gender advocacy program.

During a Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) forum Wednesday night, PNP Chief Director General Avelino Razon said the recruitment of 300 policewomen was at the orders of the president.

"We are hiring 2000 [policemen] more this year, 10 percent of whom shall be women as desired by the President," Razon said.

Razon said the PNP hopes to hit a target of police-to-population ratio at 1:500 from the present 1:700.

"The policewomen will be part of our women and children's desks as part of our gender advocacy program," Razon said.

During the forum, Razon also said that during his 11-month stint from December 2007 to August 2008, the total crime volume went down by 9.32 percent from 65,479 to 59,379 of the same period the previous 11 months.

Index Crimes, or crimes against persons and property which include murder, homicide, physical injuries, robbery and theft decreased by 3.75 percent during his term from 34,840 to 33,535 the previous year.

He attributed the decrease to faster response to crimes, better police performance and efforts to upgrade equipment and facilities.

Aussie does put smile on RP kids' faces

A TEAM OF MEDical professionals from Australia will conduct a week-long medical mission in Manila dubbed "Operation Rainbow" to help put a smile back on the faces of Filipino children with severe facial deformities.

According to the Australian embassy in Manila, the surgical mission will start at the General Malvar Medical Hospital in Quezon City on Sept. 14 to 19.

Since 1998, Operation Rainbow has been sending skilled volunteer oral and plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses on medical missions to countries where cranio-facial deformities are hugely untreated.

"Every mission continue to hold a high priority within the organization, giving dignity and hope to children who would otherwise remain disfigured for life. Quebia D. Sadana

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Gas price going down …

From page A1

Other oil companies, including Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Petron Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc., Seaoil Philippines Inc., Unioil Petroleum Corp. and Phoenix Petroleum Corp. said Friday they will cut pump prices by P2 a liter for all fuels at 12:01 a.m. today.

According to the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude shipped to a Sept. 1–11 average of $100.65 a barrel, from $112.86 a barrel in August.

Prices gone down 7 times

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for a barrel as of Sept. 11, from the $110.26 a barrel average posted last month.

Brian Angat, prices of gasoline products have gone down seven times for a total of P8.50 a liter, while prices of diesel and kerosene have dropped a total of P6.50 a liter.

With this price reduction, pump prices of premium unleaded gasoline now ranged from P53.25-P52.85 a liter, diesel from P48.90-P51.80 a liter, and kerosene from P53.16-P50.80 a liter.

Losses still to recover

In an earlier interview, Edgar Chua, chair of Shell Companies in the Philippines, said oil companies still had some losses to recover—from the February-July period when under-recoveries peaked to as much as P9 a liter.

"But market forces will dictate whether or not we could still recoup those under-recoveries. Some companies have no more losses to recover," he said, pointing to the different factors affecting how oil firms, depending on their size and inventory levels, reflected international prices on local pump prices.

Department of Public Affairs manager Virginia Fabregar said pricing must bid more to do with market forces than recouping under-recoveries.

"We are just reacting to market forces. With falling international prices, we can't continue to limit or restrict or under recoveries become compositions plays a bigger role," she said.

Show the evidence

Many millers and bakers are also invoking under-recoveries to justify a hike in the price of pan de sal, but Trade Secretary Peter Favila wants a justification for the move.

"Show us the data," said Favila in an interview yesterday, threatening to file charges of profiteering against those if they push through with planned increase without evidence to back claims of under-recoveries.

"The reason they provided us is the increase in the price of raw materials. For flour millers, the reason they gave us was that current inventory was acquired three months ago at higher price. So they will unload it now," Favila said.

Bakers are eyeing a 25-centavo increase for pan de sal and P1.50 for loaf bread.

Use the ultimate arbiter

The increases will take effect Sept. 15, said the Philippine Baking Industry Group, echoing the decision of the Philippine Association of Flour Millers and the Chamber of Flour Millers.

A piece of pan de sal costs P1 to P1.50 when bought from the neighborhood bakery but P5 to P5.50 in other bread stores.

Although flour prices are going up in the Philippines, prices of flour prices have been going down to the same level of the last quarter of 2007 since April.

"As of Wednesday, we have been paying 19750—or 390 more—for each 25-kilogram bag of flour," said Philbaking president Sergfelix Ursal. A

"We might add 25 centavos per pan de sal but we'd make it bigger so we might keep the current price but make it smaller," said Philippine Federation of Bakers Association vice president Lucilo R. Chavez. With a report from Ernesto Dominguez

GOING, GOING … Since August, prices of gasoline products have gone down seven times for a total of P8.50 per liter. INQUIRER FILE

UP AND AWAY Bakers are looking at a 25-centavo increase for pan de sal and P1.50 for a loaf of bread effective Sept. 15.

Scientists: To avoid heart disease …

From page A1

sore are the most common culprits, but the new research shows that neglected gums can be added to the list.

700 different bacteria

"We now recognize that bacterial infections are an independent risk factor for heart disease," said Jacques Deslkine of the University of Brittany in Pottiers, at a meeting of the Society for General Microbiology in Dublin.

"In other words, it doesn't matter how fit, slim or healthy you are, you're adding to your chances of getting heart disease by having bad teeth," the professor said.

There are up to 700 different bacteria in the human mouth, and failing to brush one's pearly whites helps these germs to flourish.

Distinct place

Most are benign, and some are essential to good health. But a few can trigger a biological cascade leading to diseases of the arteries linked to heart attacks and stroke, according to the new research.

"The mouth is probably the distinct place in the human body," Steve Harrigan of the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin said.

"If you have an open blood vessel from bleeding gums, bacteria will gain entry to your bloodstream."

Once inside the blood, certain bacteria stick onto cells called platelets, causing them to clot inside the vessel and thus decreasing blood flow to the heart.

"We examined the processes inside the blood vessels and in the heart, and demonstrated that bacteria use different mechanisms to cause platelets to clump together, allowing them to completely ensure the bacteria," he said.

Antibiotics won't help

This not only created conditions that can provoke heart attacks and strokes, it also shielded the bacteria from both immune system cells and antibiotics.

"These findings suggest why antibiotics do not always work in the treatment of infectious heart disease," Jenkins said.

In separate research, a team led by Greg Seymour of the University of Otago (Inside) in New Zealand showed how other bacteria from the mouth can provoke atherosclerosis, a disease that causes hardening of the arteries.

Stress proteins

All organisms—including human and bacteria—produce "stress proteins," molecules produced by conditions such as inflammation, toxins, starvation, or oxygen deprivation.

One function of stress proteins is to guide other proteins across cell membranes.

But they can also latch onto foreign objects, called antigens, and deliver them to immune cells, provoking an immune reaction in the body.

Normally, the body does not attack its own stress proteins.

But bacterial stress proteins—which are similar—do have common antigens, and so if (as happens) the immune system cuts no longer differentiate between the two, said Seymour.

"White blood cells can build up in the tissue of arteries, causing atherosclerosis," he explained in a phone interview. AFP

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ARAW NG MGA BARANGAY
SETYEMBRE 11, 2008

Court hears bid to keep militant in Manila city jail

By Alliver W. Lopez

A MANILA COURT HEARD YESterday the motion for reconsideration filed by the Philippine National Police of the court order ordering peasant leader Randall Echanis to the PNP detention center at Camp Crame, Quezon City, from the Manila City Jail.

In the motion it filed last week, the PNP said it was the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology that should have custody of Echanis, 63, deputy secretary general of the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, as his trial was being heard in the Manila Regional Trial Court.

The PNP on Sept. 3 ignored the commitment order issued by Manila RTC Branch 32 Judge Thelma Bunyi-Medina remanding Echanis to the PNP Custodial Center or Crame one month after he was moved from there to the MCJ.

"The PNP said it was not their duty to detain the accused," said branch clerk of court Ismael Sandoval yesterday.

Acuzbar said new MCJ warden Hernan Grande, in a letter, told the court Echanis could remain at the MCJ since security at the jail had been augmented by the Manila Police.

Grande's predecessor Emilio Calang had told the court Echanis was a "high-risk prisoner" who should not be held at the MCJ.

Echanis' family and supporters had protested his transfer from Camp Crame in the cramped MCJ because of his frail health.

Echanis' son, Ravenell, had earlier said the PNP's refusal to take his father back to Crame is a move that could prompt the filing of contempt charges against the authorities.

Yesterday, some 50 militant peasant-members of Manila City Hall seeking the militant leader's freedom, while Jess Asuncion, Mindanao, Echanis' co-accused in the murder cases Hayan Muna rep. Satur Ocampo, and Anti-Poverty and Aid Councils of the "Tagaytay 5" accused Ocampo in seeking to side to lend Echanis moral support.

"While along (They have no) basis or illegal detention on his Parliamentary support... to stop the illegal disappearances and illegal warrantless arrests and all this political prosecutions of peasant leaders and progressives by the Arroyo administration," said Mindanao, co-organizer-secretary-general Jerry Acuzbar.

Aside from Echanis and Ocampo, Commercial Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison, the National Democratic Front's Luis Jalandoni and a handful of other militant leaders have been charged with ordering the killing of several 30 farmers in Southern Leyte in 1985, as part of a supposed purge within the then People's Army, the CPP's military arm.

In a statement, Echanis had said the charges against him were false since he could not have ordered the kill orders while a political prisoner of the Marcos regime.

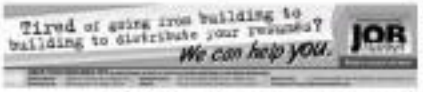
"From 1983 to 1986, I was detained under solitary confinement and was held incommunicado in Camp Aguinaldo, then my lawyers and close relatives were not allowed to visit me. From 1986 to 1986, I was at Camp Aguinaldo, Regional Command 2 stockade, and detained therein until my release in March 1986.

"I was not in a position to be part of the so-called purge in Leyte in 1985," he said.

Echanis, who suffers from hypertension, will have to remain at the MCJ while the court resolves the PNP motion within 90 days.

YOUNG TURKS

Young Turks on the move. Pangasinan Rep. Rachel "Baby" Arenas takes her oath as district chair for Lakas-CMD together with 28 others in a projected buildup of the party for 2010. Lakas-CMD president and House Speaker Prospero Nograles presided over the oath taking. Pyt by officials Rep. Ed Zialcita, former Sen. Heherson Alvarez together with Lakas Executive Director Ray Roxgaro. Pangasinan provincial board, former Vice Governor Oscar Lambino and mother, Ms Rosemarie J. Arenas witnessed the affair.



'Marce' gathers strength, lingers off RP

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By TJ Burgonio

AFTER DAZE SWIRLING OVER THE SEA, typhoon "Marce" yesterday intensified into a new "supertyphoon" and spawned stormy weather over Batanes and heavy rain over the rest of Northern Luzon.

While tarrying over the Philippine Sea for days, Marce gained more strength yesterday morning, packing peak winds blowing at 175 kph and gustiness of 210 kph, nearly approximating a superphoon's strength of 220 kph.

"It has no direct effect because it's relatively far from the archipelago," said weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

While far from land, the typhoon is expected to bring winds of up to 100 kph over Batanes on the tip of Northern Luzon and winds of up to 60 kph to the Babuyan and Calayan groups of islands.

Pagasa maintained Signal No. 2 over the Batanes group of islands and Signal No. 1 over the Babuyan and Calayan groups of islands.

"People in Batanes should expect stormy weather," Cruz said. "Areas under Signal No. 1 would experience gusty winds with rain."

Marce slowed down on yesterday morning only to pick up speed at 7 kph later, and slightly changed course from northwest to northward, indicating that the monsoon rains over the rest of Luzon would last longer.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the typhoon was still hovering over the Philippine Sea about 300 km east-northeast of Basco, Batanes.

Until it starts landing it is expected to further enhance the southwest monsoon to bring moderate to heavy rain over the western sections of Luzon, including Metro Manila and the Visayas.

"We should expect more rainfall," Cruz said as he advised the public to be wary of rain-triggered landslides and flashfloods.

In view of the rough-to-very-rough seas caused by the southwest monsoon, Pagasa cautioned fishermen against setting out to sea on the western seaboards of Luzon and Visayas.

COMPOSTELA TRAGEDY

Rains halt search for landslide victims

By Hilden Diano

RETRIEVAL OPERATIONS FOR TWO REmaining missing residents—believed to be a mother and her child—after a landslide hit Barangay Masara in Compostela Valley were suspended yesterday due to heavy rains that authorities feared could trigger a similar disaster.

Major Roland Bodil, commander of the 25th Infantry Battalion, said by phone that the search-and-retrieval teams were working to retrieve what they believed were the bodies of the two missing when it was decided that the operations should be stopped for the day.

The victims were buried alive in the landslide that struck the village in Mawo town last Saturday, said Bodil, who also heads the incident command center that oversees retrieval operations and the evacuation operations for the residents.

Around 279 families or 1,236 persons have already been evacuated out of Masara and neighboring village, Maiot.

Another landslide hit the village located at the foothill of a mountain at around 2 a.m. on Sunday, 12 hours after the first landslide hit.

Bodil said 24 people were confirmed killed in the disaster, with 22 others injured.

Bodil said one resident had asked the search-and-retrieval teams to focus on the other side of the river where his wife and child could be buried.

"They (search teams) have more or less pinpointed the location of the man's house," Bodil said.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) had recommended that Masara and Maiot be evacuated of its residents as they were no longer suitable for habitation, calling them "high risk areas for landslides."

Bodil said the evacuation of the residents, some of whom preferred to stay with relatives and friends in other towns and villages, was still under way with the provincial and municipal local governments, as well as the army, providing trucks and every available vehicle to the effort.

Early yesterday afternoon, a fact finding with two firemen on board met with an accident in Barangay Tibanlo in Mawab town as it made its way to Barangay Ekudeb in Mawo to assist in relief operations for the hundreds of evacuees, Bodil added.

One of the men was unconscious and the other was hurt but not seriously, Bodil said.

"It's fortunate that the firetruck didn't fall into the ravine," Bodil said. The truck had fallen on its side on the zigzag road.

FINDERS AND SOLDIERS recover the body of one landslide victim in Compostela.

Agri chief wants rice farms to go organic

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTHUR Yap wants 10 percent of the country's 1.67 million hectares of rice farms nationwide to go organic as one of the government's roadmaps to address poverty and hunger.

At the recent kickoff of the Go Organic! Movement in Quezon City, Yap gave his full support to the advocacy of various environmentalist groups, local government units and the academe to promote organic farming to help solve the country's food crisis.

"What we want to show to the public is that we have an extension program in place in partnership with the local governments, academe and the non-government and farmers' organizations. We are set to roll out the program by the dry crop season," Yap was quoted by the movement as saying.

The new group led by Alabama City Mayor Herbert Bragado of Pangasinan recently launched the Go Organic! Movement to promote organic farming as the PHILSIS effort in Quezon City. The groups include the Philippine Social Regeneration Movement, Paragua-Filipinas, Center Stage Inc., La Liga Policy Reforms, 500 Filipinas, Education for Life Foundation, University of the Philippines-Los Baños, Philippine Greens and Earth Day Network.

"I, myself, am a believer of organic agriculture. We are all concerns. We are willing to accept the program to increase food productivity and farmers' income. I am happy to be here," Yap said.

Yap, according to the Go Organic! Movement, disclosed that he had signed a special order creating a task force headed by Agriculture Undersecretary for Special Concerns Bernie Rosario-Fuyat to finalize the partnership agreement to incorporate organic farming under the government's PHILSIS program next month.

He noted a 30 percent drop in chemical fertilizer use due to price increases.

"I want to see an increased income of all farmers nationwide. But we have a big problem when the prices of fertilizers run high. For that reason, the President ordered an increased production through PHILSIS," he said.

"This is where organic farming comes in. And we look forward to a fruitful partnership with the Go Organic! Movement for the successful transformation of our rice farms to organic farms."

Yap also discussed plans to hold a nationwide tree planting culminating on Oct. 16—World Food Day—or a means to promote organic farming to food governance and Filipino farmers.

Former Senator Helena Benitez, honorary chairperson of PHSIS, also expressed her full support for Go Organic!.

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OPINION

Cooked

SAMAK SUNDARAVEJ IS OUT AS PRIME MINISTER, stripped of his post by Thailand's Constitutional Court. It is no coincidence that the court ruling came after thousands of Thais took over the government office of the man they regard as the Machiavellian proxy of disgraced former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and vowed to stay there until he stepped down from office.

EDITORIAL The sight of a citizens' uprising is stirring; it reminds us of our own people-powered history. And yet the tale against Samak is not black and white. Unlike our own experience with people power, the continuing drama in Thailand is not a morality play.

Samak came to power after the military government that ousted Thaksin ended political turmoil and allowed new elections. He assumed Thaksin's old office in large part because he benefited from Thaksin's political legacy: a dramatic realignment of the sources of political power in Thailand.

But he also inherited Thaksin's controversies, particularly an alleged climate of corruption that became the Thai military's rationale for deposing the billionaire businessman in a coup in 2006.

Samak, however, added his own controversies, riling the public. He virtually waged war on Thai media. He opened himself to conflict-of-interest charges when he decided to continue his cooking show (he is a renowned chef in Thailand) even after he assumed political leadership. And that proved to be his undoing. But perhaps the most embarrassing of his many missteps was his resurrection of the discredited idea of forming an Organization of Rice Exporting Countries amid an international rice emergency. The suggestion immediately deflated Thailand, the world's leading rice exporter, as dictated by greed and unconcerned about the effects of controlled prices on rice-importing countries like the Philippines. The reaction from the Thai public (and reportedly from Thailand's royal house) was swift and unequivocal, and Samak quickly withdrew the proposal. But the damage had been done. Because of this and many other scandals, Samak was disregarded goods.

The timing of the crisis cannot be more serious. Thailand is set to assume the rotating leadership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in November (a term which may last longer than the usual year, if the Annan Charter is successfully ratified).

And yet while the case against Thaksin was robust, the case against Samak is shaky, at best. Samak's fault was that he did not represent Thailand's old elites. Instead, he came to power because Thaksin had redrawn the political map, and dismantled power, in particular the power to elect key political leaders, in the periphery, to farmers and peasants. Thaksin's populist policies created a new power bloc solid enough to return Thaksin-era politicians to office.

This populism explains why Samak raised the (too) proposal. An association of rice exporters that would set global prices would have directly benefited the very rice farmers who make up the Thaksin power bloc. And this very populism is the reason the streets of Bangkok are clogged with anti-Samak protesters. The dream senators, essentially, want to return to the old ways of governance.

In the old days, political power was sanctioned by Thailand's revered king and shared by bankers, the civil service and the military. In Thaksin's political map, the king remains the source of legitimacy, but political power is concentrated in new hands.

Several days ago, Samak's foreign minister resigned his post. Because he was perceived as very close to the king, the resignation was received as a withdrawal of royal sanction. Last week, Samak declared a state of emergency, but after an initial clash, the protesters remain on the streets while soldiers look on. This troubled necessity was interpreted by many as a sign that Samak's government could not rely on the military's support, too.

In effect, the crisis in Thailand has held the country's democracy hostage. Samak was catapulted to power because essentially free elections put him there. The protesters, however, for reasons both good and bad, wanted to undo the election results.

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Welcome floods in Malabon of my boyhood

THE RECENT FLOODS INFAMOUS BY IT'S photos "Maring" and the deluge (north wind) inconvenienced millions of people (except, perhaps, those living in Malabon, my hometown. There, floods are so common as breathing out and breathing in. (I has been dubbed "the Venice of the Philippines" because the people learn to move about in boats, and many houses are built on stilts to keep them above water.

The reason is Malabon's geography. It is below sea level and is situated at the mouth of Manila Bay and for each a small city too small than 4 cluster one congressional district with Navotas), two rivers run through it. These rivers overflow their banks even when it does not rain, during high tides.

As far as I can remember, as toddlers who could barely walk, we looked forward to the coming/coming of the floodwaters because then we could play in the water on the road and in the yards while our big brothers invented the river it self! But unlike today when the water that floods Malabon and Navotas is polluted, the water that was clean and clean. And the floods then were occasions for merrymaking rather than cause for dismay or anger.

The Malabon of my boyhood was a pleasant place, the best of two worlds. It was near enough to Manila so that residents did their shopping in Divisoria, Sta. Cruz and Quiapo, yet it retained its rustic atmosphere. It was a town of backyards, rice fields, vegetable gardens, orchards and open meadows in which children spent endless hours as play and adventure. Children learned to swim before they could walk and learned to fish, to hunt and make traps for birds. They also learned to make their own toys, and to slumber up and down trees.

The Tenejeros-Tullahan River runs from the mouth of Manila Bay through the middle of Malabon and out to Bituwangan in Bulacan. In Barrio Tinajeros (where I grew up), there was a sandbar where the river forks through Barrio Catmon, then flows back to join the Letre section to Caloocan. The river supplied fresh an water

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

to commercial fishponds lining its banks. The banks were lined with thick stands of mangrove, and among their roots lived crabs, shrimps and fish.

Tinajeros Street runs from Barrio Tinajeros, on the northeast end that goes through the town center to Navotas and then to Tenejeros (the barrio that gave the river its name) which leads to Bulanon Hallway at Barrio Catmon, a wooden bridge spans the Catmon River from this barrio to the next barrio, Tonsuya. Tonsuya was one of the river. We also drove from overhanging branches of mangroves and kalumpit trees (being the riverbanks. From some of the bigger branches, we tied ropes, and we would swing like to many junior Tarzans over the water and let go at the end of the arc, splashing into the blue green water below. We would play in that river until late afternoon, way past lunchtime, when the tide began to ebb, until we heard our elders calling us home. The rain always seemed to come very brightly in Malabon, rain or shine, so that all of us, because of the long exposure to the rain, became dark complexioned like boys to my.

When it rained, the river would overflow its banks, the roads and yards, and adjoining fishponds. And because of the fishponds, there were of course many fish.

Fish that escaped to fishponds because they fish in the wild. They outsmarted man, perhaps in an instinctive effort to go to spawning grounds. In an overflow (rainwater rushed from the yards down the canal ditches, manholes or drains to spray, barely four years full climbed up the banks, literally, to splash in the ankle-deep water in the yard.

From the windows of our house, we used to watch them, and when there were enough of them splashing in the yard, we would go down and catch them by hand. We put them in earthenjars called tapayan. Feed them morsels of cooked rice every once and then, and get them for cooking as needed.

One unwanted house in Malabon used to have a basement. When the fishponds overflowed, the water entered the basement, and with the water were fish. We would have them splashing in the water. They were trapped and couldn't get out even after the floodwaters subsided. We let them stay there, feeding them from time to time, and then caught them when we needed meat.

In the Malabon of my boyhood, it was easy to catch viands for the family any time. Any boy could go down to the river with washing hat basket and a pot and catch shrimps by simply groping in the mud for them that bodies buried there. Or we would go crabbing. Among the rugged roots of the mangroves, there were innumerable holes that were the homes of crabs.

Crabs or not roaming themselves but scrambling inside at the first sign of an intruder. We would reach by in haste and take position a them with slingshots. Most of the time we missed, but sometimes we scored bullseyes. Having lost life, we would tramp in the mud with digging tools, and when we saw a big one scrambled into its hole, we would dig it out.

At night, fish gather at the shallow pools around the mangrove roots. With incandescent torches, we would see them there, unmoving, seemingly mesmerized by the bright light, until one a single motion to put a fish trap called salakab over them, grope for them in the mud, and put them in a basket.

But the easiest way to catch fish was by hook and line, a boy hook dangling from a string tied to a bamboo stick. The hook was baited with shrimp or fish. We spent endless hours fishing from the banks of the fishponds.

(More next)

Getting fired over a TV cooking show

THAILAND'S CONSTITUTIONAL COURT RECently barred Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej out of office for violating the constitutional ban on outside employment. Samak had accepted $1,350 for appearing on four shows of his program "Tasting, Complaining," which he had hosted since before he entered politics years ago, giving it up two months after he was sworn in as prime minister. His defense was that the money was merely reimbursement for transportation costs and for cooking ingredients. He should have gone all the way and followed the eminent chefs of the Vietnamese revolutionary Ho Chi Minh, who is said to have trained as a pastry chef under the legendary French master Escoffier.)

Samak and his cabinet have now stepped down, but only temporarily, the party apparently has the option to re-elect him as prime minister and he is not so doing so.

Samak's firing coincides with widespread People Power type protests apparently led by the same guys who ousted Thaksin Shinawatra in September 2006 and precipitated the anti-Thaksin coup. They have further cooped out by dare around his office, bedecked in the royalist yellow.

However, other observers have lamented that the Constitutional Court withdrawal its office by elevating a petty violation to a corruption level crime, and disregarding a battle royale reality—that under the erstwhile el popular sovereign it is not that Samak shouldn't be ousted, but he has to be ousted electorally—through a vote of no confidence in parliament, or by voting his party out of office in general election—or if judicially by overturning rules of sunshine charges equal to the matter of his office.

What the anti-Thaksin/Samak protestors seemed to be setting up is similar to the anti-Estrada movement in 2001. In both cases, the protestors aim for the alchemy of a popular movement and a judicial verdict, which appropriately couldn't exist a sitting leader, but which together can effect the ouster and then legitimize it. In Samak's case, perhaps it was hoped

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

that the Constitutional Court would break the impasse, force him to step down albeit temporarily and use that interval to provoke a way out for Samak to save his face and his followers to save their faces.

Now contrast that to Philippine electoral and judicial politics. Here we have the "Hello, Garci" tapes where a sitting, democratically President Macapagal-Arroyo's, conspired with "Garci" to cook the election results. Not like the presidential spokesman, no less, played the tapes before TV cameras, the spurious winners in that election remains in power, and Garci remains a free man. We have Am-Am Bulanin, ex-agriculture undersecretary and chief culprit in the diversion of fertilizer funds for a presidential campaign. The DA has rejected his plea of amnesty—and the secretary of justice announces that he will be welcome back home without the fear of arrest on indictments just like any other citizen. In other words, not like the rest of us who have never pocketed or ripped off billions of pesos in fertilizer funds.

And now the Court of Appeals scandal. A foreign observer sat in on one of the hearings conducted by the panel of retired Supreme Court Justices Cecilia Cruz-Munoz, Florita Bellosillo, Romeo Brawner and Ramon Caflaja to be heard the hearings as refreshing in their transparency because they gave us a rare glimpse of the human frailties that lie behind the judicial façade. I am thus perplexed that the Court, barring any of such deliberate disputes and hearing, has so far tabled the evidence as a silver platter, seemed to hold back on examining some of the dramatis personae.

Pilatenses happened to Camilo Sabio, chairman of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, and Jesse Santos, counsel for President Arroyo's husband and whom Arroyo appointed to the board of the government's pension fund, the GSIS.

In the case of the PCGG chair his own family, or, Justice Jose Sabio Jr., testified under oath that Camilo spoke to him about the liberalize Securities and Exchange Commission case. Camilo has confirmed as much. The timing was even worse. Camilo phoned his brother Justice Sabio just as the Court was conducted Jesse himself became aware of the "adverse information that he had been selected the third member of the division" that would hear the case. Camilo belongs in the executive branch and is beyond the Court's disciplinary power, and the Court did right in refraining the case on the bar confidant be professional misconduct.

In the case of the First Gentleman's lawyer, it is even worse. He sits on the governing board of the GSIS, a party with a direct interest in the case. Sabio can at least claim he was just doing his constitutional duty as head of the DA, a presidential appointee, and the dirty hands of his principals are all over the place in this case), but apparently only Sabio and not Santos was rebuked or the bar confidant for investigation.

If Santos phoned Camilo Sabio, it would become Sabio who would be liable for the "stain" on the bastion of the CA justice who could sit in judgment in the case. It means that the GSIS board member was privy to the "adverse information" about a case involving the GSIS and found the link in Camilo. I hope that the chain of events will be fully exposed in the SC decision.

This is one of those very moments in legal history when the stories that are usually heard in hushed tones in the corridors are suddenly documented for all to see. The Supreme Court division should now not merely to punish lawyers inside it at the first sign of an infraction. We would want by in haste and take position a them with slingshots. Most of the time we missed, but sometimes we scored bullseyes. Having lost life, we would tramp in the mud with digging tools, and when we saw a big one scrambled into its hole, we would dig it out.

At night, fish gather at the shallow pools around the mangrove roots. With incandescent torches, we would see them there, unmoving, seemingly mesmerized by the bright light, until one a single motion to put a fish trap called salakab over them, grope for them in the mud, and put them in a basket.

But the easiest way to catch fish was by hook and line, a boy hook dangling from a string tied to a bamboo stick. The hook was baited with shrimp or fish. We spent endless hours fishing from the banks of the fishponds.

(More next)

Obama boxed into a corner

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE GALLUP POLL ON WEDNESDAY SHOWED Republican John McCain surging ahead with a five-point (49 to 44) lead over his Democratic rival Barack Obama, just a week after Alaska Governor Sarah Palin delivered her acceptance speech following her nomination at the Republican vice presidential candidate in the November election.

Palin has dominated the theme of all the summer campaign with the riveting punch line that the difference between a "hockey mom and a pit bull is ... lipstick." With that one-liner, she penetrated the Obama bubble, soothing fears grasping for economic issues punch. All Obama could say was a cliché, "We can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig. You can wrap an old fish in a piece of paper called change, but it's still going to stink after eight years." This was his riposte to the McCain-Palin campaign pitch that they were the agent of change.

"What do they have the nerve to say it?" Obama asked a rather lame listless audience. "When you've been supporting the current president (George W. Bush), you can't be for change, in power, and you're not offering anything new, how is it that you're attacking about change? You're not. It's empty rhetoric."

Since Palin's acceptance speech at the Republican nomination convention more than 10 days ago, Obama and the Democrats have stepped up their attacks on Palin, more than on McCain because her captivating entry into the race is upending Obama's strategy and often overshadowing McCain, according to the online newspaper Politico.

Democratic Rep. Rosa Delauro, in introducing Joe Biden, the now eclipsed Democratic vice presidential candidate, tipped into Palin's mood, "There's no way you can dress up that record," even using a lot of lipstick," in endorsing Obama, former New York Mayor Ed Koch said, "Palin seems the hell out of him." Pro-Obama media have unleashed attacks on Palin, with stories that allegedly McCain had like he was playing second fiddle against the Democratic ticket. Obama left the Democratic convention in Denver with an 9-point lead among white women, but by the time McCain pulled out of his Pauli, Minnesota, with Palin at his side, he had taken a 12-point lead. Republican Rep. Candice Miller says Obama had only one shot at Palin spoiling the Democratic ticket — and that is to select Democratic governor Hillary Clinton as his running mate. "Every woman in America knows what Barack Obama did to Hillary Clinton ... if Hillary was on the ticket, he'd be in a much better situation in was women voters."

A Clinton adviser said, "Obama has got to be kidding himself" for not choosing Clinton as his No. 2. Julia Pitzinski of the American University Women and Politics Institute, said, "I don't think Palin would be seeing those gains if Hillary was on the ticket. When Obama picked Biden, it gave Republicans an opening, and they are taking full advantage of it. The question is: How long will it last?"

Quinnipiac University Polling Institute assistant director Peter Brown said the Obama campaign was looking itself it is discussed the importance of the Clinton voters' problem. "The isn't about Hillary it's about Democratic problem with women," he said. "Hillary won about 18 million votes from women voters in the Democratic primaries...there are 32 million women voting in the general election."

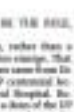
Clinton has said she'll list the road for Obama, but her voice says she refused to be "in sent Palin on the ticket."

BBC News said Palin is a "storied politics" but "no should not blame gap or lipstick or Republicans. If this is a crisis it is largely of Barack Obama's own making. The brazen agent of change, the audacious interpreter of American destiny, the rousing orchestrator is sounding like an ordinary actuary. The Democratic nominee has been found time is cannot endlessly reciting to the campaign-class cliché and spouse, unable to meet the concentration needs the issues and the Future."

Health for all

"TREATMENT OF THE POOR SHOULD BE THE RULE, rather than the exception."

Sometimes it's during the open forum, rather than a speech itself, when the most quotable quotes emerge. That statement about health care in the Philippines came from Dr. Alberto Romualdez Jr., who delivered a UP centennial lecture last Tuesday at the Philippine General Hospital. Romualdez spoke on the "Quality Nursing Service in the UP College of Medicine and the health secretary during the Estrada administration.



PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Romualdez's speech outlined how health inequities have aggravated social injustice in the country. In call-answer of the Philippines, the life expectancy is more than 80 years, such as infant mortality rate below 10 per thousand live births in country 300 babies born per year will die before the age of 5, as par with the country's richest countries. Among the poorest Filipinos, the life expectancy is betray-six, and nearly 1 out of every 10 babies born in a year will die before the age of one.

Rising Paradox

Many Pandey came ago. One of the poster boy of the government, he is most frequently cited as an example of how government has failed. He died the other week, at the age of 63, of kidney failure.

Romualdez was emphatic: So one needs to die of kidney failure in this day-and-age, with the availability of medicines.

"We must address the root causes, not simply blaming the poor if they can't access health care. We forget that we have a system that is problematic at all levels. The tertiary level—specialized hospitals—has become too expensive and beyond the reach of most. Treatment at this level is now tied to one's ability to pay, with disturbing signs that even the PGH, supposedly a public hospital, is becoming more and more unaffordable, especially with medical interns giving priority to foreigners. More than 85 percent of kidney transplants in 2007, Romualdez noted, were done on foreigners.

The secondary level...smaller hospitals that offer general medical services—has been sacrificed in favor of the services. The primary level—where health is promoted and where the most neglected, yet, it is this primary level that is the most important, offering vital services such as immunization for children, health education, family planning, even the rudimentary treatment program. If we had a strong primary health care system, Romualdez pointed out, Many Pandey would likely have retained his 7.8 many years ago and would not have died so young.

Romualdez's remarks were especially salient because this week marks the 30th anniversary of the Alma Ata Conference, organized by the World Health Organization. The world's health ministers, including that of the Philippines, endorsed a primary health care approach to achieve health for all by the year 2000, including a package of services—from essential drugs to water and sanitation—as to provided at the community level, together with the training of community health workers to deliver the services, especially second practices.

The year 2000 has come and gone and we are nowhere close to having health for all. We've also junked the decision of Alma Ata, in favor of World Bank prescribed programs for more privatization of health care and emphasis on the curative.

Romualdez described how our public health sector, already small to begin with, continues to shrink. The current government spends only P1,000 per person per year. Philippine per day with the bulk of health expenditures still coming out of pocket (meaning household funds and savings). He showed a chart of the 10 hospitals leading in Philhealth reimbursements, and only one, Davao Medical Center, was public, suggesting that its private patients, most of the upper classes, are the ones who get the bulk of funds.

Romualdez's speech was full of new insights into old problems. One that struck me was his observation that more than 30 percent of our health expenditures go into expensive medicines (and, I would add, medical supplies), mainly pushing companies based in the West. This leaves little in the health coffers for the basic needs of our citizens, nurses and health workers, which then encourages brain drain, nominally to the very countries that has made us pay through our nose for medicines.

Manifesto for health

Romualdez concentrated his speech with what could be a manifesto for people-centered primary health reforms. He invoked the principle of social solidarity to argue that the well must care for the ill, and those who can afford health care should help to pay for those who cannot. In Philippines, he said, should pay for essential drugs, and no sick Filipino should be turned away from hospitals for lack of money. Every Filipino, he said, must be informed and empowered to demand equity, equality and effectiveness.

There were two discussants, Dr. Ramon Paterno and Mr. Mario Taguiwalo, and they both reinforced many points brought up in the speech while raising new questions. "Can we achieve health equity in an inequitable society?" Paterno asked.

Part of the open forum and discussion looked into the viability of the reforms. Romualdez insisted that a stronger public sector, including "targeted subsidies" for the poor's health needs, is possible. Government budgets for health and other social services can still be increased, if we get our priorities right. And we can raise more money through tax measures on cigarettes and liquor.

Inevitably the discussion moved into the need to pressure politicians to commit to these health reforms. With 2010 around the corner, the "presidentiables" need to be approached and educated about what's needed in health.

Romualdez left unanswered, and rightly many in the audience knew why, why in the first place politicians will play to reform the system. Romualdez and that health providers now themselves become obstacles to health, especially in terms of promoting medicines being pushed by the drug companies, but he was quick to add that they could also help in bringing change.

I see the challenge to one medical students. Romualdez said we can't blame doctors and nurses for wanting to leave, to escape the problems created by previous governors of Filipinos. Ingenuity—unbounded on the options. One is to join disengage, an easy option where the health professionals blame and let generations of Filipinos for living in crisis situation and leave the country. Or, they could opt to stay and solve problems.

UP's centennial speeches are not meant for UP alone. The themes of social injustice recur, reminding us that time is running out for our society's poor. Even as Romualdez spoke, the reflector was unaware that a few hours earlier, a young desperate mother in Laguna had used insecticide and to kill three of her children, aged 4, 3 and 2, and then took the same poison herself. Her husband is a construction worker in Manila.

* * *

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Dogs and do-gooders

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"THE BIT MYTHOLOGY" IS THE NAME GIVEN to an annual final report (now on its third year) that combines music, dogs and do-gooders in a worthy to raise funds for the Philippine K9 Search and Rescue Association (PKSAI) and the Philippines National Red Cross (PNRC).

This year's editions will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 27 in the Forbes Park home of Ramon Ang, and will see the latest developments in both procedures and a memorable lecture. Joining Mr. Cabrido in the roster are six Filipino musicians and singers, some of whom gave a preview yesterday at the residence to be performed during the "Dog Days Afternoon."

Among those on the press launch were Sandy Duncan, a Belgian Malinois and a former cop and their handler) who showed everyone present what skills the dogs possessed, effortlessly searching out and "warning" any scents they have been trained to detect with unfailing accuracy.

Dave's constantly harsh on the owners worldwide, leaving the lawn and pool, with accompanying talk that entered been weakened homes to bathroom-dancing to blood donation, it was easy to believe that all Sandy and her dog Bella had to do was sniff out a guy's hotel presentation period, we are living right now in a country that is threatened by climate change, including both brought on sought by D'Alessio and Bonoc, more powerful tropical cyclones, and the likelihood of a repeat of the 1991 flood in Manila. It would seem like the well done by the Red Cross and the PKSAI would be more important and deserving of support than ever.

LOUSIANA says that over the past decades, the Philippines has been stumbling into and has enabled, threatening areas of the country, especially in Mindanao, with drought. What's worse is that much of the area that has fallen has been brought by typhoons or tropical cyclones. Tracking the "history" of cyclones in the West Pacific over the decades, experts have found the frequency and severity of storms appear increasing. In The Philippines, though, notes Loyaga, there has been a shift in the areas visited by these weather disturbances, with more and more typhoons hitting Visayas and Northern Mindanao.

While climate change also threatens the country, especially Metro Manila, with rising sea levels, human activity also adds to our woes. The mangroves is also shrinking, and indeed, says Loyaga, experts say Metro Manila is sinking much faster than the sea level is rising. "Sinking" has many causes: unabated and unscientific siphoning of ground water, unrestricted construction, and the weight of buildings and other structures. No wonder it takes just a few hours for motorists of rain to flood our streets and cripple traffic in the city.

* * *

WHILE the Manila Observatory has been working with government agencies, multi-lateral banks and local governments to systematic risks and "map out" possible sites of the most disaster and the most vulnerable populations, when disaster strikes, the task of rescue and relief operations becomes overwhelming in the needs of the homeless and grieving, and helping communities rebuild and rehabilitate is just as urgent and important.

Search and rescue missions rely much on the mind of Metro Manila's urban dogs, and the PKSAI is now a contributor in the ASR, when she helped found the PNRC. Nina chairman emeritus of the group. Sparks brought their acclaimed people, as well as dogs trainers and breeders together to "change Filipinos' outlook toward dogs: that dogs ought to be respected and their talents recognized, especially in the field of search and rescue."

Right now, PKSAI is the first and only organization in Asia that is a member of the US-based International Association for Search and Rescue (Inasar), which certifies search and rescue dogs and their handlers, as well as conducts regular refresher courses and seminars to improve the dogs' and handlers' skills.

Affiliated with numerous government and non-government agencies involved in disaster relief, PKSAI has marked its the flood, famine, tsunami, fire, earthquake and landslide. Southern Luzon, landslide and the Guinobatan, Albay landslide. The dogs have also helped find missing mountaineers and can also be deployed to search for missing persons.

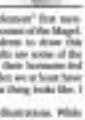
* * *

A FREE review bemoans that despite the recent set by their dogs (Richelle, Flora and Chairman, who just gave birth and so was unable to join the search and rescue efforts in the recent disaster sites, "our Filipinos still don't appreciate our local dogs' abilities." In Guinsaugon, he remembers, local disaster operations people were skeptical of the dogs' abilities and refused to believe that they could find anyone alive until they had smelled humans. When a foreign K9 SAR team arrived a few days later, their dogs validated what the local dogs found. "If their find only began digging where our dogs had found scents, maybe [the] rescue of a restaurant who was still alive," he says.

A Red Cross official also recalls that when the Spanish rescue team arrived with their dogs, they were met by President Macapagal-Arroyo. The official quipped: "while our own dogs were working so hard in Guinsaugon, and receiving little, if any, recognition."

"Dog Day Afternoon," then, could be a way of putting rightful, if belated honors to the Philippines' own dogs and their handlers, as well as after weeks in the exhausting and yet unbearable field of disaster rescue, relief and assistance.

The Philippines in a Golden Age



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

BILLED AS "THE EIGHTH YOU WANTED a thousand years to see," the Ayala Museum Gold Room is worth a visit. All that glitters is gold... pre-Spanish gold, that is, jewelry made by our ancestors that is just dropping. Before the Ayala Museum exhibit, one already marveled at the Rangkas limited ed Philippine Gold Board, a work on exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum. This display is quantity and the quality of its presentation set a new benchmark for curatorial design. I don't normally gush, but I have been to the Ayala three half a dozen times and I have yet to get over my enthusiasm.

During last month, I agreed to be the curator of a computer screen. I ignored the gold because what the Ayala Museum does best is a "virtual copy" of the Boxer Codex. This recorded late 16th century manuscript is one of the treasures in the Lilly Library in the University of Indiana in Bloomington, and Stephen Rogers' have to get to see the original. The wonderful illustrated manuscript presently known under the name of its former owner, the eminent English historian C.R. Boxer (1904-2000), one of the authorities on Asia in his time.

Fifteen years ago, I was invited as lunch at Boxer's home in Camberley, London, where he told me with a wide smile that he purchased this manuscript thought at an auction in the late 1940s. It was listed as an 18th century manuscript on Asia in the catalogue and Boxer saw in a lot of 10 pounds...and forgot about it. Some weeks later, the manuscript arrived in the mail. When Boxer opened the package he realized he had a treasure, he realized that the auction house cataloguer was mistaken and he had stumbled on an unpublished sixteenth century manuscript. Seeing the manuscript on a computer screen in the Ayala Museum brought back memories of that wonderful lunch and the chance to handle the original manuscript.

I went to the museum to look at the text of the manuscript because somewhere on its margins a librarian or a "point implement" for was used in Antonio Pigafetta's account of the Magellan expedition. I am no student to those that used the text and the marks are some of the most amazing drawings from their humanist-led imaginations. In the Boxer Codex we at least have an idea of what this mysterious thing looks like. I was not disappointed.

After that, I went over the illustrations. While there are other printed and manuscript sources on the Philippines, what makes the Boxer Codex stand out are the detailed colored illustrations of sixteenth century Filipino embellished with gold leaf showing their clothing and ornamentation. Boxer was of the opinion that such a fine illustrated manuscript was commissioned by a high-ranking Spanish official in Spanish Philippines, probably the governor-general or even the archbishop of Manila. The manuscript covers Cagayan, Cebu, the Tagalog areas, Visayas and sections of neighboring Indonesia and even China. Some of the illustrations haven't been widely published in books and have even been used on bathroom curtains and T-shirts.

The Boxer Codex is particularly important with regard to the clothing and ornaments of 16th century Philippines. It shows not only how different the Filipinos looked in the pre-Spanish era but also the Asian element, but more importantly how gold jewelry was central in archeological sites in the last century were worn.

Most early Spanish accounts of the Philippines mention gold jewelry. Pigafetta saw the first to describe pre-Spanish, pre-colonial gold.

In recent years, many gold artifacts have been found in archeological sites all over the Philippines. Unfortunately, these were looted by pothunters. This culture out of their context, it is difficult to know how these gold pieces were once worn and what other materials were associated with the gold.

Different Spanish accounts provide descriptions of the jewelry and sometimes even note what the Filipinos called them: bangles, bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces and not-so-new called. With both text and illustration, the Boxer Codex makes it easier for scholars to study pre-colonial gold.

The Ayala Museum gold differs from that of the BSP because the artifacts are supplemented by 21st century gold of days in age before the digital camera. Thus the Boxer Codex illustrations can be used for other contemporary accessories, for example Antonio de Morga's "Success de las islas Filipinas" (Mexico, 1609) which describes the clothing of the male inhabitants of Luzon (Tagalog area) as wearing breeches, rings, anklets, worked like spun wire and watch links on one hand, coins, many finger other colors, bracelets on the arms which they call calombigas, made of gold very thick and of different patterns, and some with rich stones, carnelians and agates and others all of gold and other stones which are worn crossed around them."

We can only hope that other illustrated 16th century accounts of the Philippines and the Filipinos will come to light to wait to come. But for the moment, the richest and earliest visual documentation of the Philippines in terms of dress and beauty is the Boxer Codex which documents the Philippines, literally, in a golden age.

Comments: aroc@info.ar.com.ph/postscript@inq.ph

Stop politicizing courts

[illegible] NEVER DIE OF SAYING THIS AND I hope someday someone will pay heed. Remove from the president the power to appoint members of the judiciary.

Just as the president must appoint institutions of the executive department, so should the Supreme Court alone appoint members of the judicial department.

The recent bribery scandal in the Court of Appeals proves my point once again. Justice Jose Sabio, Jr. is being instigated insidiously as aspiring for a spot in the Supreme Court, which supposedly explains his pertinacious reward the Government Service Insurance System case Mahaslihug in no court lands against Morales.

Given the lamentable reality in this country where the president alone determines who is fit to sit in the judicial branch of the government, credence is being given to the insinuations that Justice Sabio, a mere trial court judge is qualified to be promoted to the Court of Appeals, and surely SC justices, to the Supreme Court. Only the president, the biggest political animal in this country, appoints them. Can the Truth fail far away from the axiom which bears them?

—STEPHEN L. MENDAÑO,
[illegible]@yahoo.com.ph

PHILIPPINES delegation including Olympics with President Macapagal-Arroyo

Intent to be disrespectful to flag immaterial to the violation of the National Heraldic Code

THIS IS A REMINDER TO BOB MONTEJO (letter) in which he disagreed with former Press[illegible] Fidel Ramos' view on the desecration of the Philippine flag and the call for public officials to observe Republic Act 8491 (The Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines).

One of the underlying reasons for the prohibition to add any word, design or implication on the flag is the fact that "all the sacrosanct ideas, traditions and expression of the principles of sovereignty and national solidarity" are already deemed embodied and symbolized by the flag.

That the words (Filipinas Kong Mahal) were printed on the "image of the Philippine flag" reproduced on a tarpaulin and that no disrespect was meant on democratic [illegible] rule, declared and reaffirmed in a long line of cases decided by the Supreme Court, is of[illegible] and punished in special laws ("mala prohibita"), "the acts alone, irrespective of motive, constitute the offense and neither malice nor criminal intent needs be discussed," to emphasize in her [illegible] rule, the Court said. "Malice is or was true, as a rule and in principle of abstract justice, men are not and should not be held criminally responsible for acts committed by them without guilty knowledge and criminal or at least evil intent, the courts have always recognized the power of the legislative organ outside of public policy and accomplished by necessity, to forbid in a limited class of cases the doing of certain acts, and to make their commission criminal without regard to the intent of the doer."

—REY SANTOS,
ilag19@gmail.com

Philippine sport should start at grassroots level

I AGREE WITH JUAN MIGUEL LUZ: "To create sports supremacy, our tactic has to go back to the basics with a comprehensive sports development program that starts in the grassroots." ("Olympic gold was made on grassroots," Inquirer, 9/10/08) Our sports leaders need to redirect policy by shifting focus—from elite sports programs to grassroots development, which is how the country's sports heroes are discovered.

It is unfortunate that we have not learned to appreciate the need to restructure sports policy accordingly. The sub-committee on sports competitions, which I chair in the Senate, has been doing a lot of deliberating on legislation intended for sports development, ranging from providing incentives [illegible] national academies—the absence of a national sports institute, but none of these are the only solutions to the ailments of Philippine sports.

Our athletes' performance in the Beijing Olympics could have been very different if the so-called "Pinoy Good Results or Great Sports" program of then Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus, which provides a focused sports [illegible] in every elementary level, had been rapped on by the country's strategic sports blueprint.

If the good secretary will allow, my committee is willing to work and engage his expertise in our quest to formulate a modern-day national sports development plan to be participated in by national and local government agencies, private sports associations and athletes themselves, pinpointing for us [illegible] sports for-all program. That maybe we can truly be prepared to meet the international sports arena anew.

—SEN. GREGORIO B. HONASAN II

Only the Filipinos can save themselves

"THE INQUIRER NOT 2 EDITORIAL, 'Effective leaders,'" rightly points out the need for selfless leaders of impeccable integrity.

But the keyword is selfless in hoping for the advent of true leaders—in the editorial mind—left us out of our pit of despondency.

It is only when we learn not to rely on any one leader that we can lift ourselves out of it.

—DOMINGO CHAVACHE CHAMANAS,
dominique.chavache@gmail.com

Retiree urges Neri to act on SSS' ID machine

MAY I CALL THE ATTENTION OF NEWLY [illegible] Social Security System (SSS) president Romulo Neri, I mean Rey.

I turned 60 years old last Aug. 31, a Friday. The following Monday, Aug. 18, I went to the SSS branch in Biñan, Laguna, to apply for an SSS Green Retiree Card and my pension.

To my dismay, I was told that the machine used for the processing of SSS ID cards was out of order and, worse, no one could say when it would be repaired.

To a newly qualified pensioner like me who has long waited for my retirement upon reaching 60 is a very sad and frustrating experience. I am sad and not exactly in the pink of health. I shudder to think that death might overcome me before I even get to enjoy the retirement benefits due me.

Perhaps the new SSS president would be kind enough to prioritize the repair of the ID equipment, so that others like me could avoid of these well-earned and deserved retirement benefits!

—EDUARDO MEDINA,
jovenia.edoreta@yahoo.com

Questions De Borja raised with his claims

"TENDER DAYS MISSED, PANCHO [illegible] (Inquirer, 8/1/08) There are inconsistencies in Francis Ben de Borja's explanation regarding his meeting with Court of Appeals Justice Jose Sabio.

First, De Borja says he is not an acquaintance of the Lopezes. Why then was he interested in meeting Justice Sabio to talk about the Meralco-CEU case that was pending before the appellate court. Second, if it was Justice Sabio who asked P5.6 million in exchange for a decision favoring Meralco, then why was it that De Borja was the one who went to the Justice Lim School and waited for Justice Sabio?

Justice Sabio hadn't announced De Borja's name yet, but all of sudden here he was very certain that he was the "businessman" referred to and looking all the allegations against the magistrate.

—ELIZABETH MEDINA,
pinoyfrugal@yahoo.com

Clark can fly!

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CA justices to forge covenant to restore public's faith in judiciary

By Lelia B. Salaverria

COURT OF APPEALS JUSTICES WILL forge a covenant to show their commitment to improving the judiciary and restoring the public's faith in it in the wake of the controversy that has cost one of them one his job.

Supreme Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said eight senior appellate court justices met with Chief Justice Reynato Puno to discuss their next moves and indicated him about the plan for the covenant.

The Court of Appeals is expected to come out with its stand on the matter on Monday.

"They will make a covenant among themselves. They will announce the steps they are taking to assure the public and to restore the trust and confidence in the Court of Appeals. They were mentioning institutional reforms," Marquez told reporters.

The eight appellate court magistrates who met with Puno were Justices Lucas Bersamin, Noli Tijam Bautista, Martin Villarama, Edgardo Cruz, Mariano del Castillo, Josefina Guevara-Salonga, Rebecca de Guia-Salvador, and Magdangal de Leon.

Because of the controversy stemming from the manner a decision favoring Hercules in its dispute with the Government Service Insurance System was arrived at, the Supreme Court ousted Justice Vicente Roxas for undue interest in the Hercules case, letting dishonest and disconsolate, and failing to resolve pending motions before handing down his ruling on the case.

Justice Jose Sabio Jr. was suspended for two months without pay for discussing the Hercules case with his brother, Chief Camilo Sabio of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, and a businessman.

PCGG chair says he won't quit …

From page A1

I would be disbarred if I could remain if the President thinks I should resign," he told reporters yesterday at the House of Representatives where he attended the budget presentation of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

The PCGG chair made the statement once days after the Supreme Court ordered in the Office of the Bar Confidant his attempt to influence his brother, Court of Appeals Justice Jose Sabio Jr., to favor the Government Service Insurance System in the Meralco case.

"I'm not happy assisting the President and I will stay until 2010, June 30, unless the President tells me, of course she says I have to leave, then I would have to leave because I never be pleasure," Sabio said.

He said he didn't do anything wrong when he called up his brother Jose in connection with the Securities and Exchange Commission's recusal and decision order that the GSIS obtained for the Meralco stockholders' meeting in May.

The GSIS sought to exclude the proxy votes of the Lopezes in the election of Meralco directors in May.

Arroyo's lawyer

The PCGG chair had told the panel of crossed by the Supreme Court to hold him responsible for the appellate court that it was Jesse Robredo, a GSIS trustee and lawyer of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, who asked him for help regarding the Meralco case.

The Supreme Court suspended Justice Sabio for two months for violating the rule on ex parte communications when he met with his brother about the case.

The high court said Justice Sabio failed to uphold the standard of independence and propriety when he talked on the phone to his brother, who was trying to convince of the GSIS stand in the dispute with Meralco.

"I did nothing wrong when I talked to my brother. But the Supreme Court has the final say on whether my views of government and I will obey and respect the Supreme Court," the PCGG chair said.

Prove it

He said those who wanted him disbarred should make their case before the Office of the Bar Confidant and the Supreme Court.

"Let them prove it," he said of the allegation that he did something inappropriate for a lawyer.

"Since my case has been referred to the bar confidant, I will await the action of the bar confidant, as I have said, I await the not less of statements of the bar confidant of what will be required of me," he added.

"And of course, the Supreme Court still has the final say on that. Whether I disagree or agree they will have to decide according to their perception of the law," Sabio said.

Thoughts on the Sabio brothers in SC decision

From page A1

sion despite the return of Justice Reyes, since Justice Sabio Jr.'s designation as acting chairman was clearly only for the duration of Justice Reyes' leave of absence. We likewise note with dismay the stubborn insistence on his interpretation of the 2RCA [Internal Rules of the Court of Appeals] and hostile, dismissive attitude toward equally well-reasoned positions of his colleagues on the proper interpretation of their rules."

However, again with due respect to my fellow colleagues, the Supreme Court, instead of finding that Justice Sabio Jr. has an unresolved case on the case, merely said: "Such conduct on the part of Justice Sabio Jr. did nothing to aid in the swift and amicable resolution of his dispute with Justice Reyes, but rather fanned the flames of resentment between them. We deem this act of behavior unbecoming for a magistrate of his stature."

Amazing

Justice Sabio Jr.'s conduct obviously merited his decision to hold on the case firmly and eventually decide the issue. It bears stressing that normally, a justice will gladly unload a case or issues his or her burden. Indeed, I am amazed why Justice Sabio Jr. clung to the case although he was aware of the pertinent provisions of the IRCA which, in my mind, is clear and needs no interpretation.

With no intention to bear Justice Sabio Jr. or to demean the valuable contribution of my former colleagues, I believe that having an undue interest in the case constitutes a more serious administrative offense which calls for a more severe penalty.

Moreover, the Supreme Court declared that Justice Sabio Jr.'s conversation with Mr. De Borja were improper and indiscreet, quoting the following findings of the panel of investigators:

"Knowing the nature of Mr. Borja's probation, Justice Sabio Jr. should have been wary of the fact that Mr. Borja could have business that Mr. Borja had with Meralco case on his mind when he called Justice Sabio Jr. True enough, Mr. Borja mentioned the Meralco case and congratulated Justice Sabio Jr. for having signed the TRO in favor of Meralco.

"But that was not the last time Justice Sabio Jr. talked with Mr. De Borja. A month later, after Justice Sabio Jr. had presided at the hearing of Meralco's petition for preliminary injunction on June 23, 2008, and the case was ripening for decision or resolution, Mr. De Borja again called up Justice Sabio Jr. and asked to meet him over dinner in 'the chat' about the Meralco case.

"Instead of telling off Mr. De Borja that he could not, and would not talk about the Meralco case, Justice Sabio Jr. agreed to meet Mr. De Borja in the lobby-lounge of the Ateneo Law School after his evening class in Legal Ethics to eat at school.

Broke shield of confidentiality

"Justice Sabio Jr.'s action of discussing the Meralco case with Mr. De Borja violated the impropriety and indiscreet. First, in talks with his brother, the second time in conversation with Mr. De Borja, Justice Sabio Jr. broke the shield of confidentiality that covers the dispute-resolution in the court in order to preserve and protect the integrity and independence of the court itself. He ignored the injunction in Canon 3, Section 8 of the New Code of Judicial Conduct for the Philippine Judiciary that: Judges shall exhibit and promote high standards of judicial conduct (and discretion) in order to reinforce public confidence in the judiciary which is fundamental to the maintenance of judicial independence."

It was during that meeting with De Borja in the lobby-lounge of the Ateneo Law School, that De Borja allegedly offered him P5.8 million, in behalf of Meralco, to step out of the case and allow Justice Bienvenido Reyes to assume the chairmanship of the Special Ninth Division because Meralco was "not comfortable" with him. Justice Sabio Jr.'s He rejected the bribe offer because he could not inconvenience anyone."

Perplexed

Justice Sabio Jr. was allegedly shocked and insulted that De Borja would think that he (Justice Sabio Jr.) could be bribed or bought. The panel is, however, honestly perplexed with spite of his outrage and responsibility, Justice Sabio Jr. called up De Borja to stop pestering him with his calls. The panel is perplexed because as early as previous to the last hearing, he could have just shut off his cell phone to De Borja's calls. De Borja denied that he interfered his offer of P5.8 million to Justice Sabio Jr. He denied saying that even if the case should go up to the Supreme Court, GSIS would still lose, because "Sapong ang yung P30 million, baka sabihin ko ay pag nga ano ba 'yan" He testified that his reply to Justice Sabio Jr's call was "Gumiliw" or indifference. Justice Sabio Jr. likened that call of his to a "hope in judgment" on his part.

In the end, the IBP investigating panel finds more credible Justice Sabio Jr.'s story about De Borja's P30-million bribe offer on behalf of Meralco, than De Borja's denial that he made such an offer. [CA rollo, pp. 50-51]

Impropriety at highest level

Justice Sabio Jr.'s acts of meeting Mr. De Borja in the lobby-lounge of the Ateneo Law School and his continued communication with the latter concerning the Meralco-GSIS case, to my mind, constitute impropriety at its highest level. Yet, the Supreme Court concluded that Justice Sabio Jr. committed a mere error of judgment and not of gross misconduct which warrants a more drastic sanction.

During the proceedings before the panel of investigators, "Mr. Francis de Borja admitted having given P300,000 to Justice Sabio Jr., some 15 years ago, a loyalty because he came to value the friendship of Justice Sabio Jr. [who] developed while the latter was helping the Bus family in a business transaction.

Mr. De Borja earned "more than P25 million" although he received only P5 million as down payment out of the sale of 100 hectares of the Bus property. He gave Justice Sabio [consideration of 10% percent of the P5 million] "more than 10 years after the Bus-owned bank in Cagayan de Oro. Since the Bus had a lot of "legal problems," Justice Sabio Jr rendered legal advice and consultation at the time that he was an RTC Judge in Cagayan de Oro City" [see A.pp. 30-31].

Surprisingly, Justice Sabio Jr. did not deny Mr. De Borja's submission.

It is basic that judges are not supposed to give legal advice and receive fees therefor. However, in its decision, the Supreme Court did not find Justice Sabio Jr. liable for an administrative offense.

Ground for disciplinary action

2. The Supreme Court resolved to fix as its binding other things: "THE PCGG Chairman Camilo L. Sabio's *ex parte* to influence the judgment of a member of the judiciary in a pending case is hereby referred to the Bar Confidant for appropriate action."

In his signed testimony read by Chairman Sabio before the panel of investigators, he narrated that Atty. Jesus I. Santos, a member of the Board of Trustees of the GSIS, requested him to talk to his brother, Justice Sabio Jr., to help the GSIS.

Atty. Santos' conduct of influencing Justice Sabio Jr., through his brother, in deciding the case in favor of the GSIS is a ground for disciplinary action. Should not Atty. Santos be likewise investigated by the Office of the Bar Confidant? [See a.lso.y

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In an effort to maintain its leading position in the country, the brand had a marked relaunch to strengthen the new brand concept and products. With over 10,000 products worldwide, it can be confusing for professionals to identify TYROLIT products to their intended usage. The objective of the brand relaunch is to organize all products under one brand.

"One Unified Brand Focused System" was the end-goal of the TYROLIT relaunch. All products are now repositioned under the brand "TYROLIT" and are intended to boost the recognition of the brand, strengthen the image of the company and simplify communication to customers.

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TYROLIT developed a logical and user-friendly system that can quickly give answer to the three following questions

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TYROLIT categorizes all its products into three quality levels, which are established "PREMIUM*** three stars, STANDARD** two stars, and BASIC* one star.

The PREMIUM *** quality level is for the professional and industry who have a very high demand on performance and tolerance in their work. The brand offers a "brand assortment for special applications with high expectations demand for STANDARD** two star quality level is best suited for "Allrounders" and "Value for money" customers. Products under the BASIC* level are marked with one star. Targeted towards budget minded customers who does not need a professional tool performance.

A Brand Customers Trust

The range of focus of TYROLIT is represented by its standard to products both as well as machines tools to ensure the highest quality and to find the optimum solution for each and every job. This quality standard is perfectly met by the TYROLIT brand which since the beginning of the company, will be established as a brand that is reliable and trustworthy.

The brand TYROLIT stands for a system of quality products, year-long market presence, a thorough knowledge of the customer and a clear commitment to the retail channel.

TYROLIT continues to develop new products and technologies, an industry standard and customer requirements, steps that guarantee TYROLIT global success. TYROLIT had invested 17.4 million euros in recent years in environmental activities, which are continuously monitored by ISO 14001-certification. This guarantees that all TYROLIT products comply with maximum requirements regarding environmental sustainability, as well as the manufacturing steps but also in their application and disposal.

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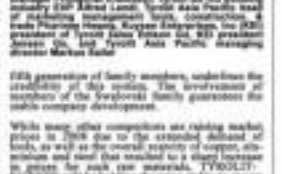

Tyrolit Schleifwerkzeuge Swarovski K.G building authority EVP Alfred Landl discusses the global and Philippine presence and history of Tyrolit

GSIS lawyer files countersuit vs Lopez firm

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL OF the Government Service Insurance System yesterday sued for malicious prosecution officials of First Philippine Holdings Corp., including the Lopezes, for allegedly filing a baseless complaint against the state pension fund and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

GSIS lawyer Estrella Elamparo said the complaint for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and the Code of Conduct for Public Officials filed by the FPHC president against GSIS and SEC officials on Tuesday was also intended to chase attention away from the Supreme Court ruling of Justice Hermie Reyes from the Court of Appeals.

Reyes, who penned the decision favoring Meralco in its dispute with the GSIS, was dismissed for showing undue interest in the case, for delivering a transcript of deliberation, for failing to rule on pending motions before deciding on the case and for being discourteous to his colleagues. Three others were also severely penalized and one was admonished.

FPHC is a holding company of the Lopezes, who control Meralco and who have accused the GSIS of trying to take over the utility firm.

Diversionary tactic

Office of the Ombudsman therefore was likewise ordered to be furnished its Orders' public admission from the investigations committed by Justice Reyes against the GSIS, and in favor of Meralco," Elamparo said in her complaint-affidavit.

At a press conference, she stressed that the FPHC complaint was "treading on the slippery slope of desperation."

Elamparo's complaint was filed before the Department of Justice. Named respondents were FPHC chair Oscar Lopez, president Elpidio Ibañez and Meralco board of directors Eugenio Lopez III, Manuel Lopez, Federico Lopez, Augusto Almeda-Lopez, Thelma Cristina Bautista-Ruffino Jr., Oscar Garcia-de Jr., Cesar Bautista, Oscar Hilado, Monica Pacunio, Washington Sycip and Artemio Panganiban, a retired Chief Justice and Supreme columnist.

The FPHC complaint, on the other hand, summoned them the alleged conspiracy by the GSIS and SEC to take over Meralco. The SEC, upon the complaint of the GSIS, had issued a cease and desist order to stop the counting of proxy votes in favor of the Lopezes during the election.

Elamparo said the SEC order invalidated the results of the May 30 election, thereby disenfranchising the GSIS and other minority stockholders.

The Reyes decision nullified the SEC order.

In her complaint-affidavit, Elamparo said the FPHC complaint was only intended to humiliate the GSIS and SEC officials and to evade their duties.

Malice, bad faith

She also said the FPHC showed malice and bad faith by alleging, without showing facts to back this up, that GSIS president Winston Garcia had conspired with the SEC officials against Meralco.

The FPHC complaint against the GSIS contained allegations that Garcia and SEC officials had committed acts to evade their duties.

Elamparo said the FPHC complaint was "clearly calculated to harass and cause damage to the GSIS and SEC officials in the performance of their duties."

She also said the FPHC complaint was "malicious and groundless" because the GSIS was only exercising its right when it filed a case against Meralco. She added that the conspiracy charge was "pure speculation" since it was not supported by facts.

She also said the FPHC complaint was "unnecessarily clustered" that the SEC order invalidated the proxies in favor of the Lopezes' sons when it just sustained the use of the proxies during the Meralco election.

SC urged to probe FG, GSIS lawyers; Santos, Elamparo

From page b1

was a "prime movant" because it was his request for help from Camilo Sabio, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, that prompted the latter to call up his brother, Justice Jose Sabio in Justice Reyes was suspended for two months.

Elamparo, for her part, had attempted to get to Reyes' office to hand him a copy of a GSIS motion seeking to defer action on the Meralco petition.

Questionable

Chavez, a former solicitor general, said Elamparo's action was questionable.

"An lawyer should do that. That is forbidden. I've never done that in my 37 years of practicing law," he said.

Determined the other day above law not being sanctioned by the Supreme Court, Elamparo said this could be because the high tribunal did not see that there was a substantial violation of ethical standards.

She said the had explained to the Supreme Court-created panel her reason for going to Reyes' office, which was to ensure that he got a copy of the GSIS motion.

"It's always been my position that I did not violate any law," she said.

Ready to lawyer for Reyes

Chavez, who earlier called on Reyes to disclose who had provided him to act the way he did, also said Operation Clean Hands would act as the dismissed magistrate's lawyer if he (Reyes) so requests.

"If he chooses us, we will run after those people who influenced him," he said.

But Chavez also supported Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's call for Reyes to be disbarred.

He noted that dismissed Court of Appeals Justice Democrito Demetrio and five associates were not disbarred after being ousted, but he said that was not a good development.

"If a lawyer is dishonest in the bench and you put him back in law practice, he would victimize other clients," Chavez said.

DOJ 3-man panel

Over at the Department of Justice, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the preliminary investigation on the bribery accusations against the Supreme Court referred to it, would be "wide-ranging" and may see Reyes on Sabio and Ibrahim.

"I don't think this case can be confined merely to Sabio and Dr Borja," Gonzalez told reporters, adding that the Ombudsman would "investigate everybody."

But he said Sabio and Dr Borja would be the first ones to be summoned by the justice department.

Dr Borja denied offering the P10-million bribe, claiming that Sabio had told him about being offered a Supreme Court seat and money to rule in favor of the GSIS.

The businessman said Sabio had mentioned P50 million as his price for rejecting the offer.

But the Supreme Court heard Sabio's version more credible than that of the lawyer.

The Supreme Court records were forwarded to the DOJ yesterday by Marquez and Clerk of Court Luisa Villaruma.

Where money came from

Gonzalez formed a three-member panel to conduct the preliminary investigation. Headed by Undersecretary Severo Pineda, the panel has Undersecretary Fidel Ricardo and Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño as members.

Gonzalez said it was possible that the DOJ would look into the source of the money that was supposedly offered by Dr Borja.

"If there was really bribery and it can be proven, Dr Borja is only a conduit. The money was not his. Where did the money come from?" he said.

Other CA judges

The DOJ would also look into whether or not money changed hands in the appellate court, and could extend the probe to other Court of Appeals magistrates. The department might summon Meralco officials depending on how the investigation goes.

Gonzalez said the tribunal's findings that Sabio was more credible than Dr Borja could affect the department's own findings, but added that the DOJ was not necessarily bound by that.

"The investigation conducted by the panel of retired justices was not for the purpose of finding probable cause. It was more administrative in category," he said.

IBP resigns call

The integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) reiterated its call for the Court of Appeals justices embroiled in the controversy to resign from the judiciary.

"We, we maintain that stand. You know, even if one [justice] was indicted, it means there is that credibility," IBP national president Feliciano Bautista said in a phone interview.

Penalty not enough

"They can address the outrage of the public and help the Court stand up after the damage wrought on the court by unfortunately resigning," he said.

He said it was not enough that Sabio was suspended for two months, Presiding Justice Conrado Vasquez and Justice Bienvenido Reyes reprimanded, and Justice Myrna Dimaranan Vidal admonished.

Reyes was found to have abused undue interest in the Meralco case, tolerated a transcript, failed to resolve pending motions before handing down the Meralco decision, and had been discourteous to fellow magistrates.

Sabio was forced Sabio for discussing the case with his brother, who is an executive official, and a businessman.

Vasquez was sanctioned for failing to resolve timely the dispute between Sabio and Reyes on seniority division should rule on the Meralco case.

Reyes was reminded for ruling on the Meralco case without waiting for Vasquez's resolution of his dispute with Sabio.

Vidal was admonished for allowing herself to be scammed to sign the Meralco decision even without reading the entire case records.

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Joker says Ping making mountain out of molehill

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL

This was how administration Sen. Jinkoy Estrada described Sen. Panfilo Lacson's raising the issue of a possibly anomalous double entry of P200 million in the 2008 budget for the C-5 road extension project that may have benefited Senate President Manuel Villar.

"It is not unlawful at all as the Senate records would show it accurate, out of a molehill, it came out as much ado over nothing," Estrada said in a statement.

He said the controversy over the double entry was politically motivated.

"The only error of Villar is that he declared his candidacy this early. If he did not declare yet, I don't think they will make an issue out of a molehill," he said.

Lacson called for an investigation of the C-5 extension project which he said received two obstructions by disguising it as two separate projects. The insertion was apparently made during the bicameral conference committee's deliberations on the 2008 budget.

Villar, though he was not directly accused by Lacson, quickly called a press conference to deny that he or his top senate projects benefited from the P400-million double allocation or the C-5 road extension project.

Fresh attempts to unseat Villar

The issue has sparked fresh attempts to unseat Villar, with Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., including administration Sen. Richard Gordon.

Villar's senate allies—Manny Pimentel, Francis Pangilinan and Jinggoy Estrada—dismissed the calls for Villar to temporarily step down, saying the senate can only be reorganized into the double-entry controversy were motivated by their own presidential ambitions.

Cayetano is Villar's party mate in the Nacionalista Party and one of 14 senators in the majority bloc behind Villar.

Pangilinan said Arroyo was allied with Villar in the Pedrosbar Group that at one time included Vice President Noli de Castro and National Economic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto when the latter two were still senators.

Partially allocated every year

Cayetano, who claimed that the majority was solidly behind Villar, said there was nothing anomalous in the insertion, nor was it accurate to describe it as a "double entry."

He explained that the extension project was worth P3.1 billion, which is partially allocated every year in the 2008 budget, the project was allotted P400 million in total, he said.

Saying the controversy prompted him to go over the Senate records, Arroyo explained that while Malacañang had only proposed an allocation of P200 million for the project in 2008, the Senate, during the bicameral conference committee meetings, inserted P200 million more for the same project.

Old is bicameral committee

"The Senate's additional proposal of P200 million was found separately from the President's original proposal of P200 million for the same C-5/President Corin Avenue project to distinguish the two items which [were] from different initiatives," Arroyo said.

If the investigation on the alleged double entry will push through, it would not reflect badly on the Senate as an institution as the Senate "approved unanimously the 2008 budget, which included the additional P200 million."

"We approved it and then we are now questioning," he pointed out.

He said that among those who voted to approve the 2008 budget were Lacson, Madrigal and Senators Manuel Roxas and Loren Legarda, who were the majority representatives in the bicameral conference committee.

Lacson noted that in the General Appropriations Act of 2008, the project is called the "construction of Prov. Umiak Avenue Extension from SLEX to Sucat Road" on one page, while on another it is listed as the "construction of C-5 Road Extension from SLEX to Sucat Road." Both entries were each allocated P200 million.

Arroyo said the two entries actually made the allocation "more transparent" as the additional P200 million was declared in a public document.

Who made insertion?

Lacson said Arroyo should name the senator who made the insertion. He said revealing the identity of the culprit would disrupt the completion of the investigation.

Madrigal denied that she was part of the bicameral conference committee that approved the budget.

"Instead of directly refuting the charges against him, Senator Villar has said that he asked drugs to carelessly slander those senators who were in fight corruption. Villar has demonstrated not only his inability to lead but pathetic cowardice as well," she said.

'Old tricks'

Sotto said Arroyo was up to his "old tricks" again.

"Why should he blame me? He should blame himself because he is the committee vice chair and he is part of the majority. If I overlooked it, then so be it. But that is not the issue, the issue is who made the insertion and who benefitted," he said.

Legarda said that if Villar was responsible for the double entry, then he should go on leave, "but he should be given a chance to explain whether it did or did not benefit him personally or his family or learners."

Pangilinan said the Senate was better off keeping on to work rather than dwelling on intrigues.

Estrada does not see any reason for Villar to go on leave.

'Honest mistake'

"These insertions are not necessarily illegal. Sometimes, it's just an honest mistake. I don't think this is enough to censure him, he continues to enjoy solid backing in the Senate," he said.

THIS AND HEAVEN, TOO Bro. Mike Velarde's reality-ser, the Arnel Land Corp., once more puts the El Shaddai leader in the hot glare of public ity. An indy, he's still facing a joinder suit at the Supreme Court for allegedly receiving P1.2 billion in right-of-way compensations for the Parañaque property affected by the C-5 Link Expressway and the R-1 Extension Expressway during the Estrada administration. PHILSTAR/DJ

PAVED WITH MILLIONS C-5 extension project has been allotted P100M for right-of-way acquisitions.

Manna for Velarde, Villar from right-of-way

From page A1

The ongoing C-5 road extension project has been allotted P100 million for right-of-way acquisitions and P400 million for civil works, which were "fully funded under special appropriation."

Antrel is already facing a suit in the Supreme Court involving another right-of-way compensation for an earlier road project, the C-5 Link Expressway and the R-1 Extension Expressway. Lawyer Ernesto Francisco is asking the court to annul the allegedly illegal compensation from the C-5 road extension project but stressed that it has so far not received any payment because of a price dispute.

"Part of my property was rendered by the extension project so naturally we have to be compensated for our land," Velarde said.

He said Antrel was contesting the price that the government offered to pay for several thousand square meters of his Parañaque property, which was expropriated for the extension project.

"We are contesting it in court because the price they gave was very, very below the market value," he said.

Velarde denied that he has benefited from the road project because of his political influence.

"There are several property owners along that project, mine is just a small part. And this project is road, it is roaming. It will benefit Metro Manila, including Parañaque and Las Piñas, and Cavite because it will decongest traffic along Sucat and airport roads," he said.

Britany denial

The C-5 road extension project is the same project that obtained a double allocation of P200 million in the 2008 budget, a brewing controversy that has stirred Senate President Manuel Villar whose property development may or may not benefit from the project.

(For related story, Page A2/5)

Sen. Panfilo Lacson has claimed that the 3.1-km C-5 road extension project, part of a 42-km road improvement to connect the Coastal Road in Parañaque in the Southern Luzon Expressway, was twice allocated P200 million in the 2008 budget where it was listed as two projects.

It now appears that Villar's Britany Corp. may have received similar right-of-way monies from the government to widen the road.

Francisco claimed the other day that Britany may have been paid P92.3 million in right-of-way compensation by the Toll Regulatory Board eight years ago for 6,153 square meters of his property that was acquired for the same C-5 road extension project.

Francisco, who is a lawyer for opposition Sen. Jinsoy Estrada, said his claim was based on a copy of a Deed of Absolute Sale between Britany president Jerry M. Sarmenta and TRB Executive Director Madonna E. Benedicto II.

Britany says not yet paid

Yesterday, Britany spokesperson Valeriano Galang denied that the company had received "P92 million or any other amount from the Toll Regulatory Board or any other state body affected by the C-5 extension project."

In a statement, Galang said that in 1999, the TRB had offered to purchase a portion of Britany's property in Parañaque.

He said the company got "exposed unnecessarily" from the P3B, supported by an opinion from the Department of Justice, that the acquisition was legal and would not violate any law.

"Considering that the TRB would to any case have expropriated the property had Britany refused to sell [it], Britany eventually agreed to convey the property to the government. Britany, however, never ever received, much less claimed, any payment for the [property]," said Galang.

More questions

Francisco yesterday said the Britany statement was an "admission that the sale transaction seemed to have pushed through but that Britany has not been paid."

He said the statement raised a further question: "If there was a transaction, where is the deed of donation?"

Francisco mumbled on the Britany documents while doing research for the plunder case filed against Estrada and Velarde in 2001. Francisco alleged that Antrel was paid P1.21 billion for its 70,348-square-meter property in Parañaque, or P15,355 per square meter, more than seven times the property's assessed value of P1,000 per square meter.

Francisco claimed that the right-of-way compensation for Antrel had bloated the cost of the project so much that it ate up nearly half of the P2.65-billion loan that the government took out to pay for right-of-way acquisitions for the C-5 Link Expressway and the R-1 Extension Expressway.

Overpriced rights-of-way

"In things stated now, the national government is secretly [in the payment of the P92.3-million loan, which did not serve any purpose other than that it enriched respondent Mike Velarde and Antrel," said Francisco in the case he filed with the Supreme Court.

Madrigal yesterday asked the Senate to investigate overpriced right-of-way acquisitions for the road projects that she claimed would only benefit rich "celebrities, developers and high-ranking government officials."

"It has been consistently reported that the purchase price of road rights-of-way are oftentimes grossly overpriced especially when the affected properties are owned by high-ranking government officials or their relatives," Madrigal said in the resolution she filed yesterday.

Madrigal said that aside from the transaction involving Villar's Britany Corp., the government also bought overpriced rights-of-way for the Molino Road in Cavite and the Daang Hari Road in Las Piñas's connection with Bacoor and Cavite, where Villar also owns properties.

Allegations

She also cited allegations that new roads, like the San Pedro link in the South Superhighway, were constructed not to benefit "peak subdivisions" and subdivision developers.

Madrigal noted that owners usually sold their properties as rights-of-way at lower market prices or even give them to the government for free since their properties that are affected would also benefit if a new road is constructed alongside them.

"It is highly irregular to purchase a road right-of-way for an exorbitant price only to give the same landowners free, when the road rights-of-way were purchased in the first place at a bargain price at the expense of taxpayers' hard-earned money," Madrigal said. With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana

WHAT WENT BEFORE

Plunder case filed and dismissed

IN APRIL 2001, THE THEN President Joseph Estrada and 11 blacklisted firms, including "Mike" Velarde were charged with plunder and graft for their alleged involvement in the irregular purchase of private lands for the construction of the 3.3-km road network called the C-5 Link Expressway connecting the C-5 Highway to the North Luzon Expressway.

Velarde allegedly sold to the government nearly 60,000 square meters of land with a declared market value of P52 million for P1.2 billion in 1999 for the road project.

4 deeds of sale

Ernesto B. Francisco, the lawyer who filed the case, said there was reason to believe Velarde might have taken advantage of his closeness to Estrada, whose presidential candidacy he had supported in 1998, to promote the land deal.

The complaint alleged that on March 30, 1999, Velarde's Antrel Land Development Corp. signed four deeds of sale with the government involving nine parcels of land in Barangay Pitiman and Galang estate in Sta. Elena, Parañaque.

The total land area involved, 70,038 sq. m., priced at P15,355 per sq. m. for a total purchase price of P1.2 billion.

Estrada allegedly "directly and personally" intervened in the land purchase, ordering the Toll Regulatory Board and the Public Estates Authority to proceed with the acquisition. He allegedly issued another directive to the TRB approving the deeds of sale.

The then Ombudsman Aniano Desierto issued a subpoena to Estrada and Velarde the following month.

However, in December 2001, the Ombudsman dismissed the case for lack of evidence. Kevin Hedreyan, Inquirer Research

Traders give soldiers fresh tuna, 'pasa load'

HEARTWARMING SIGHT Trucks (above) from the International Red Cross proceed to a relief operation in Datu Piang town in Maguindanao. (Right) Evacuees line up to get their share of goodies. (Left) Abdul Maligasan has been displaced eight times from Barangay Bandara in Pikit, North Cotabato. She joins other evacuees in calling for the end of the hostilities in Mindanao and to save the peace process during a press conference of the Mindanao People's Caucus in Quezon City on Thursday. AP/MARI TABACO JOSE

Transcription of the first paragraph is not available.

For 7 brigades

Torres said that the fresh tuna came from General Santos. Social leaders and businessmen in Maguindanao and Davao have also sent sacks of rice, boxes of vitamins, sardines and other canned goods and toiletries to soldiers on the frontlines in Maguindanao and Lanao del Norte, he said.

A pharmaceutical company, Mercopharma, along with the Philippine International Trading Corp., donated 200 units of plasma expander, which seems the loss of blood.

Torres also said that governors, mayors, financial institutions had donated P50,000 worth of mobile phone loads for the seven brigades operating in Central Mindanao.

"It's very encouraging to be getting support from all over," Torres said. "The message here is that fully support the military's operations against the lawless BIAF groups."

Little relief for evacuees

In contrast, the group of 17 evacuees said during a news conference in Quezon City that little emergency support was coming to evacuation centers in South Cotabato, Lanao del Norte and Maguindanao. They appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to stop the military operations and provide relief to the evacuees.

The National Disaster Coordinating Center has said that some 500,000 people have evacuated but that livelihood or food hunters because of the operations violence. About half of the number are reported to be in some 180 evacuation centers.

Fr. Eduardo Vasquez, who is facilitating the delivery of food to 1,000 displaced families in evacuation centers in Pikit, said, "Food is the most urgent concerned the people."

Since clashes erupted last month, the government has delivered bags of rice to Pikit only twice. Other food provisions were supplied by the World Food Program, Catholic Relief Service and other NGOs, he said.

Evacuees eat once a day

"Some evacuees eat only once a day. We have to feed them [so they will] research other people's homes," Vasquez said.

In Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte, families of evacuees who have set up makeshift tents made up of coconut fronds by the sea, have the same demoralized look did.

"I asked them if they need tents. 'No,' they told me. 'We need food'," said Baron Bira Manorilla, a community leader. "Their immediate concern is food to sustain them daily."

Bae Magdalena Sakar, leader of the Mortgaging tribe in Arakan Valley Cotabato, appealed national leaders for their lack of concern for the evacuees.

"We have not seen the senators, congressmen and the President here since clashes broke out here. Why aren't they going there to help the people?" she said.

"The President bonded us five years ago," said Maligasan, who was part of the 17 members who overturned his house to decline a ceasefire in 2003 following a military operation against the MILF in North Cota-

bato that displaced 400,000.

Tired of running

"Five years after, there's war again. We're tired of running away. We want peace," she said.

Mary Ann Arnado, secretary general of the Mindanao People's Caucus (MPC), said the government should order the military to stop aerial bombings and ensure safe the operations.

"Let the ceasefire mechanism handle the situation. We have a ceasefire committee, let's activate them," she said.

MPC chair Octavio Dinampo agreed. "Why don't they stop the war and resume the peace process? People should not be made to suffer for the sins of two."

Related stories: Hope, fear fill road of Cotabato until the government doesn't stop the MILF to discipline the renegade commanders, and negotiate the penalty of the imposed on them once captured.

Kim undergoes brain surgery; Seoul on alert

From page A1

pass for "any kind of situation or incident to be limited or full-scale warfare," according to a legislative aide.

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak told security ministers that "thorough preparations should be made to minimize confusion over changes in North Korea's political circumstances."

South Korea is still technically at war with its hardline communist neighbor. The two forces line off across a heavily fortified border, with 63 troops backing up the South.

Kim's health and possible succession are top of North Korea's most closely guarded secrets.

Kim "collapsed because of a brain problem and had surgery from which he is recovering," Minister Lee was quoted by lawmakers as telling a closed-door session of the legislature's defense committee.

This was the first official confirmation that Kim, 66, had undergone surgery.

Analysts fear the powerful military could assume more power in any post-Kim era and take a harder line on cardinal dissension and cross-border ties.

Kim has led the communist North for 14 years, under which the exclusive state has seen its economy shrink, its ballistic missile arsenal swell and UN sanctions imposed due to its nuclear program and firm attitude not two years ago.

French, Chinese doctors

A French Korean lawmaker said Kim was on the mend, with no signs that he had lost his grip over his country.

Kim can stand up with assistance and is able to communicate, ruling party lawmaker Lee Cheol-woo said after a meeting with South Korean spy chief, who booked Kim's report in the head media that Kim was partially paralyzed.

The newspapers Seoul Shinmun and Joongang Ilbo, citing unidentified government officials, said Kim had a brain surgery and that foreign doctors, possibly from China and France, performed the operation after Kim collapsed about Aug. 15.

"If he had surgery, it means it's serious," said Kim Jong-sung, a neurology professor at Seoul's Asan Medical Center.

Paranoid state

A cerebral hemorrhage can result in death, paralysis, difficulty in speaking and other disabilities, although if it is minor, recovery is possible without long-term effects. Surgery is generally only considered in the most serious cases, he said.

Kim's brush with serious illness has caused South Korea to reexamine its contingency plans. North Korea has one of the world's largest standing armies and can fire missiles capable of reaching all of the Korean peninsula and most of Japan.

He death would create huge uncertainty over leadership in a deeply paranoid state that has threatened to reduce the capitalist South to ashes and calls Japan and the United States mortal enemies.

A worst-case scenario for South Korea would be a collapse of the North, with 23 million people and a broken economy.

Nuclear deal

A parliamentary study released a year ago said the South would need to spend about $1 trillion or more to reunite the North's dilapidated infrastructure, which would wreck Asia's fourth largest economy.

Seoul would also have to brace for a flood of refugees fleeing out of the North.

"The latest incident proves that this scenario is no longer a distant prospect but an inevitable reality we may have to face right soon," South Korea's largest newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, said in an editorial.

In a development that could crank anxiety yet higher, North Korea is nearing completion of a missile test site capable of shooting off long-range rockets, US broadcaster CNN cited analysts as saying.

The North seems to be banking more than a nuclear disarmament deal and analysts say progress would elevate certainly thunder in the event of a leadership struggle.

'Dear Leader'

Kim, whom state media calls the Dear Leader and has done known now, was groomed for years to succeed his father and the North's founding president Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994.

During his time in power, Kim Jong-il has crushed dissent and placed an enormous distance between himself and any potential rival, subtly moving them to no class here.

Speculation about Kim's health intensified after he missed a parade Tuesday commemorating the communist state's founding 60 years ago. That followed rumors that foreign doctors had been called in to see him.

North Korea tried to dispel the rumors about his health.

"There are no problems," Rep. 2 leader Kim Yong-nam told Japan's Kyodo News agency. Reports from AFP, Reuters and AP

"DEAR LEADER" File photo taken five years ago and released by the Korean Central News Agency shows Kim reviewing a massive military parade celebrating the 50th anniversary of his country's founding. His absence from a similar event five years later sparks massive rumors that he's ailing. AP

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PYONGYANG BY TORCH LIGHT This youth performs in the North Korean capital during celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the communist country's founding on Tuesday. AFP

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NFA sets aside P1B to purchase palay direct from farmers

CABANATUAN CITY—SETTING aside P1,870 million to buy palay from farmers in Central Luzon, the National Food Authority (NFA) has sent procurement teams in rice-producing areas in the region to assure farmers that their produce will be bought at fair prices, an NFA official said.

Nicolas Cruzcosme, NFA regional director, said this agency has established 30 buying stations and organized 15 mobile procurement teams in harvest areas in the region.

He said the NFA has set aside funds for palay (unhusked rice) procurement, following reports that farmers were becoming disspointed because of the low prices offered by traders.

Traders have been buying dried palay at P12 a kilogram, while freshly harvested grains sell for P9 to P11 a kg, lower than last year's buying price of P18 a kg.

The NFA, Cruzcosme said, would buy dried and fresh palay at P17 a kg.

"I directed our procurement teams to go direct to our farmers to buy their produce. We have also asked them to pay the farmers right," Cruzcosme said in a local radio interview.

He said farmers who do not have NFA-issued passbooks, which record purchases, could also sell their produce in the agency. He said, however, they would be asked later to get passbooks.

The passbook system, he said, is a safety measure adopted by the NFA.

He said the agency has already bought 20,000 bags of palay from Gerardo Lazon farmers. "We expect the volume to increase as peak of the harvest season approaches," he said.

—Amabel Angsoy, Inquirer Central Luzon

Mayor cries overprice on P28M gravel road in devastated town

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE mayor of an Iloilo town that was worst hit by Typhoon "Frank" has accused Iloilo Rep. Judy Syjuco of allegedly "hijacking" and attempting to implement an overpriced project worth P28 million for a three-kilometer gravel road.

Reta Mayor Serafin Gordoncillo said Syjuco had asked the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to release the funds through the DPWH 1st District, after it was approved upon request of the local government of Reta.

ROAD destroyed by Typhoon "Frank" in Reta town is back to its old form—gravel and dust instead of asphalt or cement that the town's mayor said was what P28 million in funds released for the project could build.

TRAVELLERS in the second district of Iloilo won't miss this signboard, and dozens of others like it, of Rep. Syjuco's people.

Gordoncillo claimed that Syjuco took no interest in the project until the funds were approved and released.

"She said it should not be implemented by the province because it's not a national road, but now she wants it. I find it highly irregular and anomalous," Gordoncillo told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

Syjuco could not be reached for comment as of 10:00 p.m. yesterday. The Inquirer called her office at the House of Representatives in Quezon City earlier and relayed to her staff a request for her statement on the issue, but she failed to respond or return the call.

The mayor said that last July he requested financial assistance for the road repair project from the Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas who is also an ex-officio of the Task Force Reta, the multi-agency body that supervises the rehabilitation programs for areas damaged by Frank.

The project involves the repair of the 3.4-km Pagungo-an-Tigbon-Calingan-Horse Road in Reta, which was destroyed by floodwaters during the typhoon.

The road connects Reta with the neighboring town of Lemery and other Iloilo towns.

Gordoncillo said he also requested the DPWH to allow the local government of Reta to implement the project through a memorandum of agreement.

The mayor said that for the same amount, he had offered to construct a concrete road measuring 6.58 meters wide and 9 inches thick, instead of simply laying asphalt on the road as earlier requested.

Last Aug. 28, the DPWH informed Gordoncillo that the fund will be released in three installments: P10 million, P10 million and P8 million.

But the mayor said he was surprised when he was informed on Sept. 4 that the initial P10.5 million was released to the DPWH 6th Engineering District upon the request of Syjuco.

Gordoncillo claimed that the earthy, district engineer George Sta. informed him that the project had been awarded to Ibiella Construction Co. through a negotiated contract because the repair was part of the province's calamity assistance.

The mayor said Sta. informed him that the work had started and that would involve reconstruction of the gravel road, not asphalting or concreting.

DPWH assistant regional director Jolly Cordero, in a telephone interview, said what Syjuco did was not irregular.

Cordero said the appropriation was only one of the projects downloaded to the DPWH office in Syjuco's district.

She said it was a regular practice among congressmen.

In a separate phone interview, Sta. also said that the mayor "misunderstood" their conversation regarding the awarding of the project.

"The project has not been awarded to any contractor. I told him that Ibiella (Construction Company) was willing to work but it has to go through the bidding process," he said.

Sta. also said the project specification called for "repair and rehabilitation work," which means that the gravel road will be restored to its status before it was damaged.

Cordero said the project could also include road improvement, including asphalting and concreting.

However, Gordoncillo said P28 million is "too much" for restoring the gravel road because the budget was intended for at least an asphalt road.

RETIRED teachers, principals and government employees take part in rallies denouncing SSS policies.

Teachers from 7 provinces demand Garcia resignation

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO... Some 500 teachers staged a picket in front of the Central Luzon office of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) here on Thursday to protest the agency's policies and demand the resignation of GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia.

The teachers, coming from Bataan, Bulacan, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Angeles City and Pampanga, City of Malolos and Baliuag and Iriga in Zambales, rose to deliver a report card that gave supposed failing marks to Garcia.

The picket was part of loud- and proud actions leading to a camp-out at the GSIS central office in Pasay City starting on Thursday, said Junior Pagadduan, chair of the regional Solidarity for the Empowerment of Teachers (Anser).

In a press statement, Anser said it wants the GSIS to "stop to all unjust deductions due to institutional lapses," scrap a premium-based policy on retirement benefits and housing loans and revise the maturity period for insurance policy.

It said under Garcia, the divisibility and accelerated death benefits of GSIS members were removed.

Anser criticized the claims and basis investment-policy (CIP) that consolidated all the accounts of individual members.

Lennon de Shepard, GSIS Central Luzon assistant manager, said the protesters did not seek a dialogue and dumped only a report's permit for their activity.

He said they only left documents talking about the issues. He said all deductions were allowed under the GSIS Act of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8291).

He defended the premium-based policy, saying this works under the principle of equity "where what you get is what your paid for."

The CIP, on the other, is an efficient way of making deductions in default accounts, he said.

"Ms. Garcia's leadership has been consistent in improving the solvency of the GSIS. The system is able to meet obligations for the next 30 to 35 years or even more," Manuel said.

—Rosette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

GMA to sign Bacolor rehab bill Sept. 29

BACOLOR, Pampanga...President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to sign on Sept. 29 a law creating the Bacolor Rehabilitation Council, which sets aside Pinatubo the rebuilding of this town that was buried by Mt. Pinatubo's 'lahar' in 1991.

Ms. Arroyo is scheduled to sign the bill a day after the 18th birth anniversary of her brother, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, on Sept. 28, according to Bacolor mayor[illegible], Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales.

Vetter of the Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trade (DHVCAT), which was named after the man who helped his town's father-in-law school.

Lahar school and the San Guillermo Church, both built[illegible] by successive waves of lahar (mudflows), because the town's surviving symbols.

There is a bumper civil legislation because it crosses 17 years after Pinatubo was buried," he said.

Gonzales said the signing comes more than two weeks after the House of Representatives approved the bill on Monday. Rosette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

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Cholera alert raised

DAGUPAN CITY—FEARING A repeat of the 2005 cholera epidemic in Pangasinan, health authorities in the province are on alert to prevent the spread of the disease that has claimed about 100 people in at least 10 towns and three cities since July.

A doctor based in this city, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to release official statistics, said information he received showed that at least 80 people had shown symptoms of cholera affliction in Bayambang town.

A report from the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and the Center for Health Development in the Ilocos region, however, showed that only 14 cases were reported in Bayambang, 12 of them in Barangay Ilocos West.

Dr. George Calugay, team leader of the Department of Health in Pangasinan, declined to confirm the number of people afflicted with cholera.

But Calugay said at least three cholera-related fatalities were reported to the DOH but he did not know where the victims came from.

Test results from RITM and CHD Ilocos showed that 38 samples were positive for Vibrio cholerae Ogawa while one was positive for Aeromonas caviae. Both are known cholera strains.

The DOH said cholera is transmitted by eating food or drinking water contaminated with human waste. It said people suffering from the disease experience sudden onset of frequent painless watery stools, vomiting and rapid dehydration.

Bulletin has 30 cases while Agno, Asin, Cabaruan, Sison, Sta. Barbara, Mangaseroa and San Carlos City have a case each. Binmaley City reports 2, Dagupan City four cases each while Alaminos City has two.

The report said the victims' ages range from eight months to 76 years.

Calugay said if the cases are not contained, it is possible that the cholera outbreak in Pangasinan four years ago would be repeated.

That year, 6,000 people from Pangasinan were reported to have suffered from acute gastroenteritis, with 464 persons later confirmed to be suffering from cholera. Fifty-five died from the disease in the province. Yolanda Isaiko-Fuentes, Inquirer Northern Luzon

FREE WATER STAR/JOEY SALCEDO

Residents of the village of San Roque in Talisay City, Cebu, take advantage of free water provided by a leaking pipe of the Metro Cebu Water District.

NEWSBRIEFS

Suicide's body found

VIRAC, Catanduanes—Police recovered Tuesday the decomposing body of a 68-year-old woman who committed suicide by jumping in to a ravine in a forested area of San Andres town, 19 kilometers from here, police said Wednesday.

Senior Supt. Francisco B. Peñaflor Jr., Catanduanes provincial police director, said Salvacion Dongsel was found by Adrian Santos, 16, while he and his friends were gathering firewood at the foot of a steep ravine in Sitio Kalsarid, Barangay Bulang Palawayan.

Investigators said Salvacion left home without the knowledge of her husband, Roman, 67, and did not return.

Stories pieced together by police said Salvacion could have been depressed by the decision of her 16-year-old daughter to quit school and instead work as a maid because of the family's poverty.

Kenar Danao, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ CATARMAN CITY

Cops probe kidnapping

POLICE are investigating the disappearance of a resort owner in Sitio Mt Kabuntusan province following reports that his kidnappers had already demanded ransom and family feuding has a role to play in the kidnapping.

Insp. Danilo Manoy, police chief of Bato Cebu Grand Town, said a man who identified himself as a Commander B. had recently phoned Lydia, the wife of Jesus Boyet Villaflores, to demand ransom.

"The caller even called the victim as 'Mamang Boy,' an indication he knows the lowest name," Manoy said.

Martinez was riding a motorbike when flagged down near his swimming resort in Barangay Kalinaog at about 7 p.m. Monday.

Manoy said police suspect Martinez was being kept in Magsikalasan.

Elvin D. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ DAVAO CITY

Indonesia quake felt in cities in Mindanao

AN EARTHQUAKE that originated from the island of Halmahera in Indonesia, with a magnitude of 6.7, shook several cities in Mindanao yesterday but no damages or injuries had been reported, officials from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

Desiderio Cabanlit, Phivolcs officer in charge for Southern Mindanao, said there was also no abnormal wave in observation.

The quake was felt at intensity 3 here.

It also shook Tagum City in Davao del Norte, Digos City in Davao del Sur and General Santos City.

Eduardo Laroza, of the Phivolcs station in Zamboanga City, said the 40-47-second quake was also felt in Zamboanga City at intensity 2.

Dennis Jay Santos and Jude B. Alpuia, Inquirer Mindanao

■ NAGA CITY

Police identify 3 in murder of nurse

POLICE released the identities of three suspects, including a policeman, in the murder of nurse Corlyn Opena, 23, inside her boarding house here.

Rodrigo Abinagrio, 37, SPO1 Reinaldo Nieves Orte, 30, and Carmen Ito Bardo, 64, were charged with the murder Tuesday.

Investigators said the crime was made to appear as robbery with homicide.

Abinagrio was Opena's lesbian suitor while Bardo was the victim's landlady.

Orte was linked to the murder for allegedly helping cover up the crime.

Elizabeth Eldayo's mother filed the charges saying the decision concerned artist's decision failed to inform her of her daughter's death.

Elizabeth said she got a missed call from her daughter on the night of the murder.

Jonas Cecilio Cellan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

ONCE AGAIN.

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INQUIRER

Dare to ask. Dare to know.

No bail for solon's brod in 'shabu' case

By Delfin Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—A Lucena City Prosecutor recommended on Thursday no bail for father and son Carlito and Sahid Alcala, both suspected drug panders, during the inquest proceeding held here Thursday morning.

The suspects were charged with violation of Section 11 of the Dangerous Drugs Act, possession of illegal drugs, accused Chief Insp. Christopher Abrahano, chief of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Calabarzon, in a phone interview.

Carlito's live-in partner, Gina Bolilan, was charged with violations of Section 12, illegal possession of drug paraphernalia, which is chargeable officiate.

Abrahano said the Alcalas would continue to stay inside the PDEA detention cell in Calamba, Laguna, pending the issuance of an order to send them to the jail where they will be detained during the hearings of their case.

Raid

On Tuesday, PDEA operatives swooped down on the ancestral house of the Alcalas inside the former pier in Barangay Cotta in the outskirts of the city.

The raiders arrested the Alcalas and Bolilan after they found more than 20 grams of crystal-like chemicals—believed to be shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride)—in several plastic sachets, assorted drug paraphernalia and cash in said police raids the bedrooms of the suspects.

Shabu ingredient

Carlito is the younger brother of Rep. Pinpin Alcala, who represents the second district of Quezon in the House of Representatives.

POLICE hold a so-called "shoe bomb" that contains the names of drug pusher's supposedly in the payroll of the Alcalas. The box was among the items seized during a raid in the ancestral house of Representative Alcala's family in LUCENA City. (DELFIN MALLARI JR./INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON)

Another brother is Quezon provincial board member Ki-ostes "Bolit" Alcala.

Police said laboratory examination showed that only more than three grams of the confiscated chemicals were actually shabu and the 20 grams ruined was to be "ephedrine," also classified as a dangerous drug and an ingredient in the manufacture of shabu.

But, according to Abrahano, the laboratory findings won't make any difference on the case since "ephedrine" is also classified as a dangerous drug and is thus, illegal.

Meanwhile, still hurting and disappointed over the arrest of his younger brother and nephew on illegal drug charges, Representative Alcala vowed to discover himself from the police investigators but appealed to authorities not to meddle the case and put political color to it.

Can't choose relatives

"I'm a representative. I can't choose my relatives. But no one is above the law. If he violated the laws of the land, he should be ready to face it and suffer the consequences," Alcala said over the phone.

But he appealed to the police to conduct the investigation "fair and square" and not have any shades of political murders.

"I appealed to the media not to put politics in the case. Let justice take its natural course," the Quezon lawmaker told this reporters.

Abrahano doubted Alcala from any involvement in drug trafficking in the area despite his brothers' and relatives' involvement.

"In fairness to Congressman Alcala, we don't have any report linking him to the illegal drug trade of his brothers," he said.

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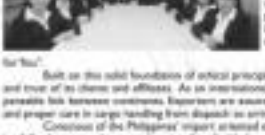

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NEWS

Nograles shrugs off threat to unseat him

By Norman Bordadora

NOGRALES

HOUSE SPEAKER PROSPERO NOGRALES yesterday brushed aside rumors threats against him, saying he is confident of the support of the majority—those in Mabuhay and in Congress—and majority of those members.

But he said there could be a revamp in the committee chairmanships, starting with a performance audit of the House committees by the deputy speakers.

"With a straight face, I can answer you, 'No,'" Nograles said when asked if he continues to enjoy the support of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her relatives in the chamber.

Nograles said that the threat was so minuscule that he "cannot feel it in my bones."

The Arroyo family members in Congress include the President's sons, Davaoque Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and Camarines Sur Rep. Diosdado Macapagal Arroyo II, and her brother-in-law, Negros Rep. Ignacio Arroyo.

Asked about the chances of his losing the Speakership just seven months after seeing the leadership from Pampanga Rep. Jose de Venecia, Nograles said: "It's possible but not probable."

Mastermind

He said he had more numbers than those supporting the mastermind in the senate plot against him that he released to media.

"You all know who the person is. You just want the identity to come from me," he said.

A day after he met with leaders of all the political parties in the House, Nograles said that he has instructed the deputy speakers to audit the performances of the House committees.

Over the past few months, Nograles has assigned the deputy speakers—Erik Singson of Ilocos Sur, Raul Fuentebella of Camarines Norte, Hussi del Mar and Hilde Garcia of Cebu, Ireneo Duremdes of Maguindanao and Sinsha Villarosa of Misamis Occidental—to oversee the performance of the House committees that have been organized into "clusters."

"After the audit, there are still changes if we will have a revamp or a reshuffle or whatever," Nograles said in the 12 radio interview.

He later said that there may be a revamp of the committee chairmanships but "only as a last option."

Nograles said that he had read reports about the "grumbling" of some lawmakers over supposed broken promises of committee memberships for those who supported him in the speakership fight.

He said that when he and his allies campaigned for the speakership, "we didn't promise any committee chairmanships."

In fact, only the position of Speaker was declared vacant.

Nograles said the audit isn't in any way connected with the reported complaints.

He said that after a year's performance as committee leaders, there must be a performance audit to determine the outputs of each committee, he explained.

"That way we can see who are overhauled and which committees are not too busy or not performing for some reason or another. Then, we make an assessment and decide what to do," he said.

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Diposajd
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DID YOU KNOW

AMONG Metro Manila women who have more than one child, the median number of months since the previous birth was 37.6, or more than two years.
(Cpt.) Annaberta Dapalan Rosaroso

New witness in young grad's shooting surfaces

'I recalled how victim looked after shooting'

By Beverly T. Mantrobal

A NEW WITNESS IN THE shooting of Tara Santelices, a 23-year-old Ateneo de Manila University graduate, in Cainta last month, offers new hopes that the case will be solved.

A passenger in the jeepney where Santelices was shot during a robbery on the evening of Aug. 4 approached the victim's family early this week to offer his account as investigators, said the victim's friend, Arjoe Blaise Mojica.

The new witness, who saw a television news report on Santelices, was reportedly bothered by his conscience as he kept remembering the look on Santelices' face after the two shot Mojica yielded.

Mojica said Santelices' father, Larry, presented the witness to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). The case was handled earlier by the Cainta police.

Santelices, a member of the band Saffron Speedwing, is still conscious after the parent's bullet fragments[illegible] inside her head.

The Santelices family sought the transfer of the case to the NBI, frustrated over what it considered slow police investigation work. The new witness, said Mojica, gave authorities a more detailed account of the incident.

"He was seated in front of us and had a good look of the suspect. He remembered the crime very well," Mojica added.

Mojica is also a witness in the case. He and Santelices were in the jeepney bound for Angono around 12:30 a.m. when the robber declared a holdup as the vehicle was cruising along Imelda Avenue in Cainta.

The robber shot Santelices in the head and escaped with the passengers' bags.

Mojica, through the media, appealed to the other passengers to help identify the two gunmen by giving the investigators their own accounts of the incident.

Couple charged for using fake document for visa application

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION is filing falsification of documents charges against a couple who allegedly used a fake transfer certificate of title (TCT) to applying for visas to the United Kingdom.

Allan de Silva, 35, and his wife Rhoda, 34, of Lipa City, Batangas, who allegedly presented the fake TCT at the British Embassy, were charged in the Taguig Prosecutor's Office.

They have been accused of falsification by a private individual and use of falsified documents under Paragraph 7, Article 172 in relation to Article 171 of the Revised Penal Code.

The Land Registration Authority, according to the NBI, said the TCT presented by the de Silvas was false and was not issued by the agency.

Lawyer Cheo de Castro, chief of NBI Interpol, said that after the British Embassy reported that the De Silvas submitted a fake document, NBI agents posed as visa applicants and observed the couple as they were interviewed in the visa section.

De Castro said undercover agents confronted the couple as soon as they left the embassy premises.

He said the De Silvas failed to present evidence to refute the allegations against them.

Police identify new head of robbers posing as cops

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE POLICE HAVE IDENTIFIED the new leader of a band of robbers disguised as military and police personnel allegedly responsible for recent high-profile cases in Metro Manila.

Senior Supt. Rustico Villa, Valenzuela City police chief, identified the suspect as Augusto Pedro Zafra, also known as Oliverio and Angelo.

"He was identified by several witnesses in a police photo gallery as the leader of the group who broke into a compound in the city last week," Villa told the Inquirer.

Police and witnesses alleged that Zafra led at least 30 men—who wore the uniforms of elite police teams, and armed with high-powered firearms—in robbing cars used customers in Valenzuela City.

Valera's group, Villa said, was also suspected of breaking into the office of a taxi company in Caloocan City the other day.

At least 15 heavily armed men in military and police uniforms robbed before dawn Wednesday the office of BMC Taksi on Rizal Road.

The police chief said Zafra had several warrants of arrest for various cases.

"New charges would be filed against Zafra based on the identification of witnesses," the police chief said.

Caloocan City police chief Supt. William Macarines said one of the getaway vehicles used by the taxi company robbers was a SUV van used in the robbery of the Metrobank manit company.

Macarines added that the van's plate number, ZUZ 806, was lifted from an original plate issued by the Land Transportation Office to a four-door Toyota Vios sedan owned by a resident of Sikatuna Village in Quezon City.

The latest incident in Caloocan brings to seven the number of robbery cases allegedly involving the group since February.

5 cops dismissed for not attending court hearings

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REgion Police Office (NCRPO) has ordered the dismissal of five policemen for not attending court hearings of two drug suspects arrested in Quezon City.

The NCRPO identified the five as PO3 Rene B. Jusi, PO2a Victor Aquino and Reyno Ilagan, and PO1 Emelito Montoya Ia., all of the Quezon City Police District; and PO2 Reynaldo Labon of the Regional Headquarters Support Group in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City.

NCRPO director Geary Barias said the order followed investigation dismissal proceedings against the policemen.

"Their failure to appear in court...despite the subpoenas led to the dismissal of criminal cases against the suspects," Barias said in a statement.

The policemen reportedly arrested Helen Bretas and Jessie Ramirez, who were charged with violation of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Law.

A copy of Bretas' dismissal letter ordered to the head of the police showed that the branding officer initially recommended a 90-day preventive suspension against the five.

But Barias said that under National Police Commission Memorandum Circular 2007-001, failure to testify in court twice paves the way for dismissal of a case is punishable by dismissal.

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Couple facing counterfeit charge

By Allison W. Lopez

A MANILA REGIONAL TRIAL COURT HAS charged a couple with forgery for allegedly printing fake peso and dollar bills.

Rene and Marivic Jacobo of 895 Quezon Blvd., Manila, who remain at large, have been arrested for violating Article 168 of the Revised Penal Code (Forging Treasury or Bank Notes or Other Documents Payable to Bearer, Importing, and Uttering Such Notes or Forged Notes and Documents).

On Feb. 15, the investigation sub-group of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, acting on a tip, raided the couple's house and seized P110,200 in counterfeit Philippine currency, $1,100 in counterfeit American dollar notes and printing paraphernalia (original drum, computer mouse, execution cards, uninterrupted power supply box, printers, allowances, computer keyboard and monitor).

METROBRIEFS

Foreman dies after fall from UP building rooftop

A 53-YEAR-OLD foreman died from a five-story plunge from the rooftop of the University of the Philippines main library in Diliman, Quezon City. Edison Fedelin, an employee of the DMC Construction, died while undergoing emergency treatment at the UP Health Service Office. Police investigators said their fedelin and a colleague, Jerry Munga, were undertaking repairs on the roof at the height of a downpour around 11:00 a.m. when Fedelin slipped and fell from the building. Munga and other workers rushed the foreman to the Health Service office but he was declared dead on arrival from multiple fractures in the body. Jeannette I. Andrade

Workers find vintage bombs in Tondo

TWO WWII-ERA bombs were found by workers conducting an excavation in Tondo, Manila yesterday morning. SPO1 Mordecai Pagaran, of the Manila Police District Explosive and Ordnance Division, said the bombs were discovered around 11 a.m. in a compound along Ilaya Street. Although Tondo police say there was no reason to find the bombs as they were digging for a septic tank, Bomb experts immediately responded to the scene. Police said the bombs were already rusty but most still capable of exploding once hit by a hard object. Tina G. Santos

2nd Pasay 'Business Cares' meeting

"MORE hundred businessmen are expected to attend the second Pasay Business Conference scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. today at the Heritage Hotel in Manila. Held every two years, the conference urges investors to come to Pasay where "Business Cares," according to the Pasay City Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the city government of Pasay. The speakers include Sen. Richard Gordon, Gov. Miguel Zubiri and Pasay City Mayor Peewee Trivilal. For details, call the Secretariat at 8543884, or e-mail at pasaychamber@yahoo.com.

Lanet book launch set tomorrow

"RISING the Full Moon and other poems in Filipino & Spanish" by Marie PL. Lanet will be launched at the 25th Manila International Book fair at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow in room 2, Lanet's 2008 Collection Center, SM Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City. The book, which is part of the Poetry on Demand Series, is published by Bend Publishing and Fuji Xerox. Originally written in English, in Filipino, and in Spanish, the book is Lanet's latest collection of poems. The cover and inside illustrations are by Danny Dalonos and the book design is by Ani S. Rebotan. Lanet is a prize-winning poet, essayist, and freelance journalist.

Good governance confab on Sept. 18

"THE country's First Coop Conference on Good Governance will be held from Sept. 16 to 20 at the Manila hotel. Former Senator and Overall Conference Chair Agapito "Butz" Aquino said that the event will bring together 100 participants from all over the Philippines. The conference will feature seminars and lectures by prominent business personalities and industry leaders who will talk on Financial Principles and Opportunities, Understanding Risk Management and Financial Literacy, among others. Sponsored by the National Cooperative Movement and the Ateneo Graduate Association, the objectives of the conference are to provide guidance and mechanics of good governance, long-sustainability, stability and proficiency in financial systems and effective implementation of programs based on objectives.

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25
Conference 10:00AM to 4:00PM
Expo 10:00AM to 6:00PM

26
Conference 10:00AM to 4:00PM
Expo 10:00AM to 4:00PM

Conference Fee: P3,500.00 (for 3 days), exclusive of snacks and lunch. FREE admission for STUDENTS only.
* Schedules and Speakers are subject to change without prior notice.

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PAKISTANI mourners step on a poster of US President George W. Bush during a protest in Multan on Sept. 10. At least 21 people, including women and children, were killed on Sept. 8 in a missile strike by suspected US drones on a Pakistan tribal town near the Afghan border. —AFP

Bush approved secret orders for Pakistan raids

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT George W. Bush secretly approved orders in July that for the first time allow American Special Operations forces to carry out ground assaults inside Pakistan without the prior approval of the Pakistani government, according to senior American officials.

The classified orders mark a watershed for the Bush administration after openly sweet years of trying to work with Pakistan to combat al-Qaida and Taliban fighters, and after months of high-level meetings about how to confront the militants' increasingly secure base in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

American officials say they will notify Pakistan when they conduct limited ground attacks like the Special Operations raid last Wednesday in a Pakistani village near the Afghanistan border, but will not ask for its permission.

"The situation in the tribal areas is not tolerable," said a senior American official, who, like others interviewed for this article, spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the missions. "We have to be more assertive. Orders have been issued."

The new orders reflect concern about safe havens for al-Qaida and the Taliban inside Pakistan, as well as an American view that Pakistan lacks the will and capability to combat militants. They also illustrate lingering American distrust of the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies and a belief that some pro-American operations have been compromised when Pakistanis were advised of the details.

The General Intelligence Agency has for several years fired missiles at militants outside Pakistan from remotely piloted Predator aircraft. But the new orders let the military's Special Operations forces strike when there until now been Pakistanis conducting ground raids on the soil of an important ally without its permission.

Pakistan's top Army officer said on Wednesday that his forces would use tolerate American incursions like the one that took place last week and that the Army would defend the country's sovereignty "at all costs." It was unclear precisely what legal authorities the United States has invoked to conduct even limited ground raids in a friendly country. A second senior American official said the Pakistani government had previously assented to the general concept of limited ground assaults against significant militant targets, but does not approve each mission. AFP

Pakistan military chief condemns US over raid

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—In an unusually strong statement criticizing the United States for sending commandos into Pakistan to fight the Taliban and al-Qaida, the chief of the Pakistani Army said on Wednesday that his forces would not tolerate such incursions and would defend the country's sovereignty "at all costs."

"No external force is allowed to conduct operations inside Pakistan," the military chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, said in what amounted to a direct rebuff to the United States by the Pakistanis, who on repeated by the Bush administration as an ally in the campaign against terrorism.

When Kayani took over as chief of the Army in November, American officials spoke highly of him and were counting on him to be their ally in much the same way pethaps even to a greater degree, as President Pervez Musharraf had been. Musharraf was president and Army chief for almost all of his nearly nine-year rule.

Kayani's statement on Wednesday seemed to call into question the extent of his cooperation and that of Pakistan's army.

The warning came the day after the unveiling in of the new Pakistani president, Asif Ali Zardari, and was unexpected here in a swift repudiation of Zardari, who is widely viewed as being pro-American.

There was widespread criticism in the Pakistani press on Wednesday of Zardari's performance at his first presidential news conference, during which he refused to condemn the raid by American Special Operations forces into Pakistan's tribal areas on Sept. 3.

That raid involved commandos, based in Afghanistan, attacking a compound in South Waziristan where Taliban and Qaida forces were believed to be.

After the attack, American officials said it was the first of what was likely to be a stepped-up campaign by the United States against the Taliban fighters who have been using Pakistan's tribal areas as stage areas for attacks against Americans and Nato soldiers in southern Afghanistan.

A senior Pakistani official with responsibility for national security said the Pakistani Army was told of the commando raid only after it happened. The official said the Army was fully aware of a new American policy to inform the Pakistanis about American plans but not to seek their approval.

In a rejection of those plans, Kayani said, "There is no question of any agreement or understanding with the coalition forces whereby they are allowed to conduct operations on our side of the border." AFP

Bolivia tells US envoy to get out

LA PAZ—BOLIVIA'S LEFTIST president, Evo Morales, ordered the US ambassador or, Friday to leave the country, blaming him for intensified opposition protests that shut down a natural gas pipeline in Brazil.

A State Department spokesperson in Washington said Morales' accusations were "baseless" and that the US Embassy in La Paz had not received any request for Ambassador Philip Goldberg to spic the South American nation.

Morales, who is a close ally of Venezuela's fiery leftist leader, Hugo Chavez, frequently lashes out at Washington and previously accused Goldberg of siding with his rightist opponents in a power struggle gripping Bolivia.

"The ambassador of the United States is conspiring against democracy and wants Bolivia to break apart," Morales, a former coca farmer, said in a speech at the presidential palace in the Andean city of La Paz.

Morales said he had asked his foreign minister to send a letter to the embassy telling Goldberg to "urgently return to his country"—a decision applauded by Chavez, who accuses Washington of backing a failed 2002 coup against him.

"The same thing is happening in Bolivia, it's the imperial aggression, the genocidal US empire," Chavez said in a speech. Reuters

"The situation in the tribal areas is not tolerable," said a senior American official, who, like others interviewed for this article, spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the missions. "We have to be more assertive. Orders have been issued."

The new orders reflect concern about safe havens for al-Qaida and the Taliban inside Pakistan, as well as an American view that Pakistan lacks the will and capability to combat militants. They also illustrate lingering American distrust of the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies and a belief that some pro-American operations have been compromised when Pakistanis were advised of the details.

The General Intelligence Agency has for several years fired missiles at militants outside Pakistan from remotely piloted

Palin's gas pipeline project not as solid as projected

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA—GOV Sarah Palin, the Republican vice presidential nominee, has sought to burnish her executive credentials by telling how she had engineered the deal that jump-started a long-delayed gas pipeline project.

Stretching more than 1,700 miles, it would deliver natural gas from the North Slope of Alaska to the lower 48 states and be the largest private-sector infrastructure project in the country. Palin has asserted the pipeline will help lead America toward energy independence.

But while she was effective in attracting developers to a project that had eluded Alaska governors for decades, an examination of the project has found that she has overstated both the progress that has been made and the certainty of success.

The pipeline route only on paper. The first section has yet to be laid, federal approvals are years away and the pipeline will not be completed for at least a decade. In fact, the pipeline might never be built, and under a worst-case scenario, Alaska could lose up to $500 million that it committed to during regulatory and other costs.

Palin envisioned by her daughter Piper as the airport in Fairbanks, Alaska, on Sept. 10. —AFP

Palin won the governor's office in part by capitalizing on popular distaste for the political establishment's embrace with Big Oil, and her pipeline strategy was intended to limit its power over the process. Her willingness to take on the oil companies has allowed Sen. John McCain's campaign to portray her as a scourge of special interests. Now, though, she will need the industry's cooperation if her plan is to succeed.

As Palin likes to campaign, tout invoking the pipeline as a major victory, some Alaska lawmakers who initially endorsed her plan now believe it was a mistake. State Sen. Hollis French, a Republican, said that to its credit with the chosen developer, TransCanada, the state bargained away so much leverage with little guarantees of success.

While Palin's legislation did away with the concessions to the oil companies that she considered to be excessive, it committed the state to paying the winning bidder up to $500 million in matching funds to offset costs of obtaining regulatory approvals and other expenses.

The bill sailed through the Legislature in May 2007.

TransCanada's plan calls for it to file an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by the end of 2011, and to have the pipeline operational by late 2018. TransCanada is not obligated to proceed with the project even if it obtains all the financial and regulatory hurdles. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ducos

Ousted Samak poised to return as Thai premier

BANGKOK—SAMAK SUNDARAVEJ was poised on Thursday to return as Thailand's prime minister just two days after a court removed him from the post, angering protesters who vowed to keep up their campaign against him.

Samak, kicked out on Tuesday by the Constitutional Court over his hosting of TV cooking shows, accepted the nomination of the ruling People Power Party's (PPP) which said he had done nothing wrong.

"Samak has accepted his nomination for prime minister," PPP spokesperson Sudaw Hiangrung said.

"Samak said he is confident that parliament will find him fit for office, and that he is happy to accept the post," he/she added.

The decision added a new twist to Thailand's chaotic politics and increased pressures ravaging the grounds of Government House, where a finely manicured garden has been reduced to a muddy, mosquito-dotted wilds camp following months of protests.

"Our stand remains the same, we still not accept Samak or anyone proposed from the PPP because the party lacks legitimacy," said media mogul and protest leader Sondhi Limthongkul.

"They violated the constitution and lack morals," he said.

Protesters have occupied the main government complex for more than two weeks, prompting a state of emergency across Bangkok, scaring off tourists and rattling the already fragile economy.

The activists are demanding that Samak and his government step down, a goal that the Constitutional Court seemed to achieve on Tuesday when it ousted him from office saying he had illegally accepted payments for hosting the cooking shows.

SAMAK AFP

Samak, a fiery resigned 73 year old, has remained out of public view since the court ruling.

The decision over whether to endorse Samak's return as premier created splits within the PPP and its five coalition partners, with some hardliners suggesting that another candidate would better withstand the pressure.

The opposition Democrat Party has also proposed a power-sharing of national unity, so-like that the powerful Army commander, Gen. Anupong Paojinda, has supported.

Sondhi's group of protesters, which calls itself the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), accuses Samak's government of acting as a proxy for ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

PAD spearheaded months of protests against Thaksin in 2006, leading to a military coup by generals who accused the tycoon of widespread corruption. Thaksin now lives in exile in Britain to evade legal charges that his cases are politically motivated. AFP

Japan to end Iraq mission

TOKYO—JAPAN SAID ON Thursday it was ending an air mission in Iraq, wrapping up a military deployment which was historic for the pacifist nation but deeply unpopular among the public.

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said Japan pleased by the end of the year to bring back planes which flew air and personnel into Iraq in support of the United Nations and US-led coalition.

The mission is Japan's last remaining military operation in Iraq after the country, which has been officially pacifist since defeat in World War II, ended a landmark ground deployment in 2006.

"After continued consultations with Iraq, we have come to believe that the situation in Iraq has gradually improved and that we are gradually achieving the purpose" of the Japanese mission, Komura said.

Some 230 Japanese troops and airplanes operating in Iraq are stationed in Kuwait. Domestic legislation allowing the mission expires in July next year.

"Even if there is nothing out the Air Self-Defense Forces, Japan's position to support Iraq will never change," Komura said.

But along the seventh anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the government said it will continue another controversial mission in the Indian Ocean, in which the naval forces give fuel for the US-led "war on terror" in Afghanistan. AFP

Bangladesh frees ex-premier Khaleda

DHAKA—BANGLADESH'S Army-backed interim government released former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on bail on Thursday after a year in prison on alleged graft charges, paving the way for a credible election to restore democracy.

KHALEDA AFP

Her was arrested on Sept. 3 last year in an anti-corruption drive by the interim authority, but the high court granted her bail on Tuesday on the last of four charges she faced.

Analysts said the release of Khaleda and her rival, former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is now on parole, was important to ensure their parties take part in a parliamentary election planned for December that would be fair and peaceful.

The government moved to jail Khaleda after diplomatic, student and civil society lead-ers said no credible election could be held if she remained behind bars, because her party would boycott and try to disrupt it.

Thousands of her supporters and party leaders greeted her after she came out of the jail and drove to the government guesthouse where she will stay, lawyer-president Zia Rahman.

Wearing a white sari, Khaleda, 63, waved to the crowd, who showered her with flower petals, witnesses said. Then she went in a city hospital to see her ailing son Tarique Rahman.

"Khaleda's release has ended an imbalance in the country's political situation," said Imtiaz Ahmed, a former vice chancellor of the Dhaka University. "Keeping her in jail after Hasina was released was both impolitic and illogical."

Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE
Torre wins anew, nears crown
/A32

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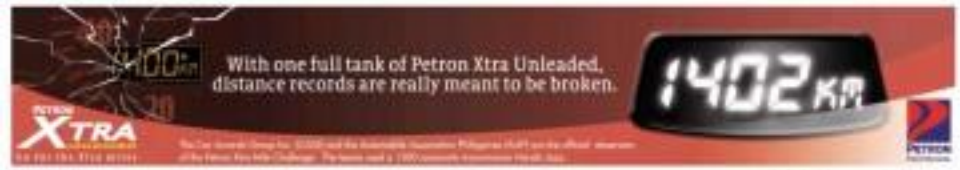

Mayweather: Manny can't win

De La Hoya trainer says Golden Boy doesn't need him to beat Pacquiao

"AIN'T NO WAY (MANNY) PACQUIAO CAN beat Oscar (De La Hoya). No way."

BENITEZ

Floyd Mayweather Sr. made this statement Tuesday to explain why he is not training De La Hoya for his Dec. 6 fight with Pacquiao at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, according to an article by Kevin Iole of National Sports.

Mayweather Sr., the boxer Iole, confirmed the split with De La Hoya after reaching him by telephone in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he is preparing Jose Quintana to face Sam Campbell in a WBA/WBC lightweight title bout on Saturday.

"Oscar doesn't want me to beat Pacquiao," said Mayweather as quoted by Iole. "He really doesn't. For this fight, Oscar can beat Pacquiao with just about anyone training him. When he lets him with that first left hook, it's all going to be over.

"So, [I] for heaven, Oscar doesn't need to pay the price to get me in this fight, because he'll win this with me or without me."

According to Iole, De La Hoya —who was in Las Vegas promoting Saturday's light-welterweight bout between Joel Casamayor and Juan Manuel Marquez— had confirmed reports that Mayweather was hired to train Ricky Hatton for his Dec. 22 fight against Paulie Malignaggi.

While De La Hoya did not say who would be in his corner against Pacquiao, Iole wrote that it was a good guess that Oscar would tap Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain, who has long been regarded as the best trainer in Mexico and who is De La Hoya buddy-to-high-roller.

Beristain is the senior trainer of Marquez, who carved out a draw with Pacquiao in 2004 before losing by split decision to the Filipino ring icon to their WBC super featherweight title fight last year.

Iole said that Mayweather had "intimated that the split was over money but did not criticize De La Hoya.

"I respect Oscar and I ain't mad with him," Iole quoted Mayweather as saying, "but he did really really super well by having me around. Oscar got rich, rich, rich by working with me and I coach white [coach]."

Besides, Iole said, Mayweather Sr. doesn't believe De La Hoya will have trouble defeating Pacquiao, who wins the WBC lightweight title on Nov. 29 in Las Vegas rather he accepted champion David Diaz.

Freddie Roach, who trained De La Hoya in his split decision loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. in May last year, will again work for Pacquiao.

"Floyd Sr. has obligations with Ricky Hatton," Iole quoted De La Hoya as saying. "Am I disappointed? Absolutely. I'm very disappointed. I respect Floyd Sr very much. I respect him as a person and as a trainer. Obviously, the door is always wide open for Floyd Sr., because I truly feel that Floyd Sr can take me, after every single fight, on a whole new level."

Iole said that the uncertainty over when De La Hoya would fight again was the reason Mayweather decided to sign up with Hatton, noting that the trainer needed work. —Nestor Sibug, Contributor

NO TROUBLE Oscar De La Hoya hits the mitts with former trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr.

Pacman likes the odds

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PACQUIAO

AS OVERWHELMING MANNY Pacquiao is set to fly out the United States Sunday night to train and at the same time begin the preparations for his Dec. 6 fight with Oscar De La Hoya at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

The 29-year-old Pacquiao, embarking on the most important bout of his life against the more experienced De La Hoya, admitted that he doesn't even like that while off-training. He now weighs 134 pounds, the light welterweight limit.

"I know that I can burn all of this [excess weight] when I start training at Wild Card Gym of American trainer Freddie Roach in Hollywood," said Pacquiao in his column this week in the tabloid Abante.

After fighting as 130 for the first time ever—and winning the WBC lightweight title over David Diaz in the process—Pacquiao will take a shot at 147 lb against De La Hoya, who will go two weight classes down to make the same weight.

"I'm undertaking on the hardest training in my life," said Pacquiao in Filipino. "It's still 12 weeks to go but time flies."

He said there are plenty of tasks to attend to before he flies to Los Angeles, including his studies and other matters.

Pacquiao will meet his promoter in New York before leaving more to other titles where there are significant Filipino possibilities.

The tight schedule has prompted Roach to call a training regimen that will ensure that the world's best boxer pound-for-pound gets to work out every single day.

"I will put on the pounds to at least keep up with [De La Hoya's] size," said Pacquiao. "But I will make sure I don't sacrifice my speed, which is my main weapon."

One of his confidants, Cebu-based boxing promoter Bert "Sikwat" Suñiel, told the Inquirer Pacquiao is training on a light but "heavier than the Filipino boxer has ever fought."

"It's going to be an uphill battle for him-ng, but he senses this very much," Suñiel said. "His main weapons are youth and speed."

Pacquiao said he will make the required weight in great shape, adding that he's sure De La Hoya, who is called mid-Diggoy will also manage to trim down to 147 lb.

"I like my chances if I see the entire dog," said Pacquiao. "Every animal, I know how to defeat him."

Fight a 'dangerous mismatch'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A DANGEROUS MISMATCH THAT SHOULD not happen.

That's how Massachusetts State Boxing Commission chair Daniel Fitzgerald perceived the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar De La Hoya fight set Dec. 6, according to boxingworld.com.

Fitzgerald said he was worried over the sheer height and bulk disparity between De La Hoya, a 10-time world champion who is 5-foot-11, and the 5-foot-5 Filipino, who won the first of his four world titles as a flyweight.

"I wouldn't even want to see the fight, except for pure curiosity," Fitzgerald said.

"I would cringe at every jab and every punch that De La Hoya would throw because it's going to hurt more than any punch that Pacquiao's ever been hit with."

Fitzgerald said he has to summit in voice his concerns over the fight.

"Manny Pacquiao is going to get seriously hurt unless De La Hoya goes easy on him, which you're not supposed to do... This would go past four of the rounds and Pacquiao, given the amateur that he is, is going to take a vicious beating," added Fitzgerald.

Last week, however, reports said a Pennsylvania Athletic Commission official who criticized the extraordinary fight, while outspoken World Boxing Council president Jose Sulaiman branded it as a "farce."

Stags center leads MVP race

By Cedrolf P. Tupas

SAN SEBASTIAN CENTER JASON Ballesteros made a strong case for the NCAA Most Valuable Player award by leading the team to its first semifinal conquest in the end of the double-round eliminations.

The 6-foot-7 standout from San Sebastian paces the rebounding and blocks department ahead of San Sebastian's Jose Elmer.

Ballesteros has averages of 14.2 rebounds per game and 3.4 blocks to go with his 8.9 points per game norm.

The 6-foot-6 Elmer, the MVP in 2008, ranks second in scoring (15.1 ppg a game), rebounding (11.6 rpg) and blocks (3.0).

Letran gunner RJ Jazul, who exploded for 37 points in a game in the elimination round, heads the scoring derby with 13.7 ppg, while Jose Rizal's Jimmy Seno (14.4) and Letran power forward Omeo Dao (14.3) rank third and fourth, respectively.

San Beda's Greg Slaughter, who is currently in scoring with 12.6 points, is the second leader with 3.4 per outing, while last year's MVP Kelvin Ocho Bello is tops in steals with 2.3 per game.

Delo Mella also averages 9.4 points, 6.6 rebounds and 4.9 assists.

Perpetual spikers stay in hunt

PERPETUAL HELP fought back from two sets down to nip Letran, 20-25, 18-25, 25-21, 25-20, 15-7, yesterday and remain in the title hunt in the NCAA women's volleyball tournament at the San Beda Gym.

LADIES TOMORROW
(for Beda Gym)
9 a.m.—Perpetual Help vs St. Scholastica

Sandrea Abra Ramos delivered the match-winning kill for the Lady Altas, who forged a duel with second seed College of St. Benilde in the stepladder semifinals.

The winner of the Perpetual-St. Benilde showdown will face volleyball Ces Sebastian in the finals on Tuesday. The Lady Stags will be armed with a twice-to-beat edge for sweeping the eliminations round.

Letran, however, clinched a finals berth in the men's division by defeating the winless champion Arellano University, 25-23, 25-20, 25-23.

Earning the right to face the Knights for the title are the San Beda Red Lions, who outlasted the Altas, 25-21, 25-13, 25-20. —Cedrolf P. Tupas

Archers trim Tams for 2nd s'final bonus

By Jeannine W. Faye

LA SALLE HAS BEEN THERE before and knows how to get it done.

The Green Archers survived a late rally by the Far Eastern U Tamaraws for a 62-59 playoff victory that remained the defending champions with the remaining twice-to-beat semifinal bonus in the UAAP men's basketball tournament yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Coming off his worst performance of the season, JP Calma returned to form with 16 points capped by a crucial layup with 1:26 minutes left that boosted the Archers' lead to 62-57 after the Tamaraws had threatened within three at 59-57.

"It was a tough finish from a horrible game; at the end of the day, we still completely trust JC" said La Salle coach Franz Pumaren.

Just like archrival and top semifinalist Ateneo, the Archers only need to win once in their Final Four match against the Tamaraws this Sunday to advance to the Finals.

The Blue Eagles, who ended the elimination round with a 13-1 record, will get one against the fourth-seeded University of the East Warriors (9-5) in the other Final Four pairing.

JP Unveiling scored on a layup with 36.7 seconds left, pushing the Tamaraws within three, 62-59, but missed on a contested game-tying triple as the buzzer.

The Archers—who never lost a playoff match since the league adopted the Final Four formats—led by as many as 16 points in the fourth period, 56-41, before the Tamaraws staged a comeback behind Rensurfer Fernandez and Ted Corvinelas.

But the victory turned to sorrow after the Archers learned that the father of assistant coach Jack Santiago, Sofronio, died due to a lingering illness minutes after the game.

"I went home [from time] because I went to [the hearings] to spend more time with his children," said Pumaren, who received emotional relief hearing the news. "And then I'm going to get that ring, I don't think I deserve that."

Pumaren took flak for leaving the Nokia Philippine Youth Team—campaigning in the 19-and-under Asian Youth Championship in Iran—to take over from Santiago and coach the Archers in their game with the Eagles last Sunday.

Calma, who contributed from a 14-of-16 shooting in the Archers' 65-57 setback against the Eagles, also contributed four rebounds, four assists and two steals.

FEUs frustration became evident in the fourth period when coach Glenn Capacio was slapped a technical foul for continued complaining and forward Mac Belmonte stonefaced after unsportsmanlike foul early in the quarter.

The scores
LA SALLE (62) — Cuntapay 0, Mamaril 0, Yee 0, Belmonte 5, Miller 0, Villanueva 3, Mangahas 3, Apelo 0, Wilkinson 0, Ramirez 12, Corvinelas 12, Calma 16.
FEU (59) — Lanete 0, Fernandez 12, Bernardo 12, Ramos 0, Serrano 7, Cuevilla 5, Salvani 2, Mariano 3, Rosales 2, Arboleda 0, Ibanez 5. 15-22 (Ch. 4-8) 40-33 (Ch. 8-11) 62-59

LA SALLE'S Emmanuelan eagle Ferdinand thwarts a driving Jan Tamaan of Far Eastern U in the fourth quarter of yesterday's game. CONNIE ECHAVEZ

Del Monte stars Plete, Tabanas take control

CAGAYAN DE ORO — JETT PLETE AND TOM ray Tabanas carded similar two-over par 74s yesterday to share a one-stroke lead at the start of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour fourth leg at the Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club course here.

Once-a-teen teenager Plete and Tabanas displayed solid form as the Del Monte employees forged ahead by one stroke over Adlin Bendijo and two-up on Louie Roy Globio, Ronny Abaso and Alvin Espino.

Pre-tournament favorites Ryan Lim and Paul Richards didn't have the start they wanted and struggled to an 81 and 82, respectively.

Rilanera, winner of the second leg of the series at Camp Aguinaldo, was two over at the turn after a 41 coming home. Lim strung good all day and finished with the same card as Jobar Misnera, nephew of professional star Frankie.

Ladies leaders

Jean del Rosario, Celine Moreno and Jo Ida Arcot jumped ahead in the ladies event while Monica Gotil and Jan Go grabbed the lead in the men's Class C and Class D of the tournament also sponsored by Mizuno, Autobidz, Callaway/Sterntron Consolidated Inc., Silver Maple Sing, Titleist, Custom Clubmakers, Gargoyle and Wave 60-1. FinXpress Philippines (Zeb Cua) and Autobidz Classic motorcycle dealership are the sponsors while Mitel Rumaco is the official host.

Del Rosario scored a 76 to post Class A by three; Moreno led Class B by four with a 101 and Arcot played the first of two rounds with an 88 for a four-shot advantage.

Gotil (95) took a four-stroke lead and Go won one up going into today's final round.

SPORTSWATCH

World 10-Ball exec named

WORLD POOL ASSOCIATION VICE PRESident and sports director Thomas Doerksen will serve as tournament director of the WPA World Ten-Ball Championship on Sept. 20 to Oct. 4 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The WPA will present world class quality of play in the tournament which has drawn 101 players from 40 countries.

Final 4 coaches in spotlight

THE RACE FOR THE TWO CHAMPIONSHIP seats in the UAAP men's basketball tournament will be the main topic in today's Sunday Talk tampanan at the Kamayan Restaurant on Padre Faura in Ermita.

Coaches of teams that made it into the Final Four—Franz Pumaren of defending champion La Salle, Norman Black of Ateneo, Glen Capacio of Far Eastern University and Dindo Pumaren of the University of the East—have been invited to the discussion and those which didn't at 11 a.m.

Pasay stagfest unfolds today

SOME 80 MOTORISTS MIX ON TAP TODAY in the KOL South 5-Stag Derby at the Pasay City Cockpit.

The stagfest is supported by members of Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association and the Bridlewood Cockers Association of the Philippines, according to PCCA chairperson Atty. Alex Rivera and Bulacan Claims.

To be matched in the 060 VEG-South group, the event requires as entry fee of P22,000.

Race 1 — Cpt Dy — Pabonarado Dy, Arcy Sam Dy, Angel Dy, Catapang Dream Dy

Race 2 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 3 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 4 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 5 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 6 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 7 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 8 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Race 9 — [illegible] — Dela Cruz Dy, Bautista Dy, Ace Dy, Dela Cruz Dy, Ramos Dy

Peping backs cage body on foreign coach

By Jane Navarro

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE PRESident Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. is supporting the decision of the SBP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas to hire a foreign coach for the national team.

Cojuangco said that a foreign coach could spell the difference for the national basketball training program being carried out by the SBP.

SBP executive director Sonny Barrios recently hinted that the federation is in the final stages of clinching a deal with Serbian coach Dejan Tomasevic, the genius behind Iran's meteoric rise in Asian basketball.

Under the 33-year-old Tomasevic, Iran captured the 2007 Fiba Asia Championship to secure one of the two Asian slots for the Olympics. Iran also entered the Fiba Asia Championship for junior stars last week using the program laid by Tomasevic.

"It's a worldwide trend," said Cojuangco. "The best athletes in the world have the best coaches in the field no matter on which continent."

The POC boss also said that Tomasevic could offer a different dimension on how to play the game that spans style.

"We've been imitating the disastrous style of play for a long time," said Cojuangco. "Get-on-one plays don't fit in."

He noted that the United States team would have lost to Spain in the finals of the Beijing Olympics if not for a couple of key plays by NBA stars Kobe Bryant and Dwayne Wade.

"It's just that the Americans were too athletic for the Spaniards," said Cojuangco.

The Philippines dominated Asian basketball in the 1960s before China took over in the next decade, when top Filipino players joined the budding Philippine Basketball Association.

It took the Northern Consolidated Cement squad, handled by domestic coach Ron Jacobs, to spur the country a brief fling at Asian glory in the mid-'80s before the Chinese re-asserted their might.

COJUANGCO

MILO LITTLE OLYMPICS Vicenza Playgirl of Sisters of Mary School bursts the javelin to a new record for the gold medal at the recent NCR Games. It's the turn of Kiddie Olympians from the North to take the floor as the Milo Little Olympics Luzon Games unfurl today in Lingayen, Pangasinan. About 1,000 athletes from the Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon and the Cordillera Administrative Region are expected to compete in 11 sports of the games to be held at the Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center.

FED LEAGUE GOLF

Forest Hills, Riviera gain finals

FOR BOTH FOREST HILLS AND Riviera, an unprecedented third title beckons.

The two squads buried their semifinal foes in convincing fashion over the weekend to forge a duel for the 2008 Men's Federation Golf League championship.

The winner of the home-and-away duels will become the first team to win a third Fed League crown in its 11-year history.

Riviera won the league's first two editions in 1998-99 while Forest Hills emerged champion in 2001 and 2005.

Co-owners partners Migge Garcia and Bong Bedoni and aggregate pair Lito Magpantay-Ronnie Limosa delivered the wins as Forest Hills posted a surprising 9-3 win at No. 2 and Wheaty Mack.

Riviera, meanwhile, sealed the dream run of elimination top seeder Tagaytay Highlands with a 5.5-4.5 win to gain the finals.

After Riviera banked on a 3-2 win at Tagaytay, a playoff was in the works as Windy Imperial and Iggy Clavecilla were ahead in the homestretch of the scramble at the Langer course of Riviera.

But Imperial and Clavecilla yielded to pressure with a bogey on the final hole, allowing Mark Lerkerna and Ace Ruberto to end arm-for-arm for Riviera.

Ricky Ocio, the Hiroshi Shoji, Jing Romero, Oscar Inducon and Al Quitangon-Hyun Inigo outfits delivered the 3-2 result for Riviera with victories at Tagaytay.

Masters Poker Cup starts tomorrow

THE COUNTRY'S TOP POKER players meets solo multi-top international bidders for the P1 million prize in the first Masters Poker Club Cup starting tomorrow at the Remedios Circle in Malate, Manila.

Multimillion Baro dela Cruz, Mark Rivera, Mark "El Specialist" Pajarillo head the Filipino cue in the tournament, which also features poker champion Derrick Yeap Sebilly" Hernandez, Adonis "Dino" Carmona, Bryan Sombrero.

The foreign field is made up of crack cuesies from the United States, Europe, Australia, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and other Asian countries.

Several local players have already qualified to join the action poker tournament this year after emerging champions from the daily tournaments held in the Masters Poker Club.

Entry fee is P5,000 for those who failed in the daily qualifiers.

The tournament's structure is World Series of Poker (WSOP) standard, which is being adopted in the Philippines to familiarize local players with the kind of play in the world's richest and biggest tournament being held in the United States every year.

Masters Poker Club officials said the daily tournament will go on until the start of the main event.

The main event's minimum P50,000 buy-in pot will be raised to P500,000 today. Daily entry fee is P3000. Entry fee today is P500.

Steve Silva, Contributor

LANCE Armstrong rues in the Stuggart-Stuttgart time trial won by Aspen. »

Lance no longer strong?

BRANSON, MISSOURI—LANCE Armstrong's former teammate and Garmin-Chipotle squad director Jonathan Vaughters believes his rider Christian Vande Velde can stop the seven-time Tour de France winner's quest for an eighth title.

Armstrong announced on Tuesday he planned on comeback racing in 2009 after a three-year absence but Vaughters doubted his ability to win another title.

"At the end of the day, I think Christian will be a better bike rider than Lance," Vaughters told reporters on Wednesday after the American took the lead at the Tour of Missouri on Wednesday.

"He (Vande Velde) can show the fury he was 20's in the Tour de France this year was not because of the absence of other people," Vaughters said, referring to 2007 winner Alberto Contador of Spain and American Levi Leipheimer's Astana team being banned this year.

"Armstrong's not actually that good of an athlete. So to me, there's really only one side. He just have to up our game a little bit."

Armstrong, who turns 37 on Sept. 18, will unveil his exact plans in New York the following week but is expected to race in the 2009 Tour de France where he would attempt to become the race's oldest winner.

Belgian Firmin Lambot, who won the event at age 36 in 1922, currently holds that record.

Vande Velde welcomed former teammate Armstrong's return and played down his chances.

"It'll have to start to see if Lance's level of fitness at age 37," said Vande Velde, five years his junior. "It's difficult to know how it unfolds.

"But I've always felt like I've had something to prove, that's just me. I think Lance will just bring up everyone's level, so I welcome it. I like it."

What partly motivates Armstrong's comeback plan is a chance to prove himself as Mr. Clean amid new member Tour de dust up she sleepless.

Wrong season, according to observers.

A tragedy of cycling and of Armstrong, the sport's most famous champion, is that it's simply impossible to turn back the clock and satisfactorily answer the questions that dogged his reign. The asterisk that clings to his career will remain.

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"Yet there's this perception in cycling," Armstrong told Weekly this that "The generation that I raced with was the dirty generation. Many of the guys that got second through 10th, a lot of them are gone. Dan Caughy. Dimitri Muraglia[sic]. Whatever, but I can understand why people look at that and go, 'Well, [they] were caught and you weren't?'"

Armstrong says he'll submit himself to "a completely comprehensive" drug-testing program. Reuters, AP

Taguig five a win away from finals

CAGAYAN DE ORO—HARBOUR Centre Taguig turned to Gee Emmanuel and Ronnie Matthias to topple Hapee-Shaman Oriental, 79-64, and move within a win of making the finals of 2008 Senator Liga D'Optimo at the Xavier University here on Wednesday night.

Emmanuel, a former College of St. Benilde guard, and Matthias, leading Mini Saladin Player candidate, proved stout opposite as they lifted the visiting Batang Global in a 2-1 head.

The Mentors won Game 2, 76-68, of the best-of-three semifinal series as the Batang Global's homecourt in C.P Tiu gco Gym, Taguig.

Batang Global is going for the clincher as of press time. Game 3, if necessary, will shift back to Taguig.

The Mentors controlled most of the first half until Matthias lost Batang Global's 11-3 run.

The spurt gave Harbour Centre-Taguig a 48-27 advantage which it never relinquished.

The winner between Taguig and Shaman Oriental will take on the 9-1, Rizal's Pedals-Cebu Nibus to the league's inaugural finals next week.

Cebu, coached by Yuyoy Alexandra whipped Bicycle-Liga, 96-89, Sunday at the Lipa Cultural Center to wrap up their semi series at 2-1.

DIFFERENT BALLGAME Mariyanna Prysiazhna (1) of Ukraine hits a shot to Latvia during their sitting volleyball classification match at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Ukraine won, 25-22, 15-25, 25-20. The event uses the same rules as a regular volleyball match.

Western Institute paces CCL Region 4 qualifying

By Bernice S. Aurelio

LIMITATION SQUADS WESTERN Institute of Technology and John Lannon Maritime University continue to show the way in the Iloilo Schools Sports Association (Issa) basketball tournament to hand up their chances of qualifying to the Region 6 quadrilateral of the Collegiate Championships League.

WIT has so far racked up four victories while Lannon Maritime has three in the tournament being held at the De Paul College gym in Iloilo.

University of Iloilo and De Paul College close the third and fourth spots with 2-1 records each.

Rounding out the standings in the 11-team field are are Western Visayas State U (3-2), Iloilo Doctors College (1-2), Western Visayas College of Science (1-2), University of San Agustin, Saint Paul University (1-3), Colegio de San Juan (0-4) and Central Philippine University (0-4).

The top two bus teams will advance to the Region 4 qualifying round where they will be joined by qualifiers from Negros Occidental.

The Region 4 champion then goes to the Issa 2 championship, alongside the Region 5 (Davao-Mindanao) and Region 6 (Bicolano-Davao-Samar) winners, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) chief player, the Cebu Schools Athletic Foundation Inc. (Csaaf) season champion and wild-card entry.

The top two teams in the four zonal championships will join the FIBA Flying 5 "Street 3" Final Challenge to be held in Manila in November.

Automatically seeded in the "Street 16" are finalists in the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) and the NCAA, and the champion squads of the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Nasaca), Colleges and Universities Sports Association (Cusa), Universities and Colleges Athletic Association (Ucaa) and the Csaaf.

Issa is one of the 27 student leagues participating in the search for the best collegiate teams in the country.

For more details, log on to official website www.CollegiateChampionsLeague.net.

Paralympics bounded by doping

BEIJING—TWO OLYMPIC ARCHERS have been banned for two years for failing doping tests, bringing to four the number of athletes caught using illegal substances leading up to the Beijing Paralympic Games.

Sherratan Birendar of Haiti and Liudmyla Ostrenovets of Ukraine gave positive tests for steroids in out-of-competition tests, the International Paralympic Committee said Thursday.

Two other athletes had already been sent home for failing pre-games doping tests—Ukrainian wheelchair basketball player Ahmet Gokhan and Pakistani powerlifter Naveed Ahmed Bara.

Alandro tested positive for the anabolic agent Boldenone metabolites in his urine. A urine sample Ostrenova tested positive for another anabolic agent, 19-Norandrosterone, in an Aug. 20 urine sample.

Five athletes tested positive during the recently completed Beijing Olympics. However, several doping officials were kept out of the games after failing pre-games tests. AP

Angels edge Yankees, snatch first playoff berth

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA—THE LOS Angeles Angels became the first team in Major League Baseball to clinch a playoff berth by winning their fourth American League West title in five years on Wednesday.

Francisco Rodriguez earned his 38th save—moving within one of Bobby Thigpen's all-time single-season record—in closing out the Angels' 4-2 victory over the New York Yankees.

Second-place Texas lost to Seattle, 6-7, about an hour later, clinching the division for Los Angeles, who have the best record in MLB at 91-57.

Robb Quinlan hit a go-ahead, two-run single to the fifth that put the Angels ahead.

Rodriguez entered with one save of Bobby Thigpen's 57 in 1990 for the all-time MLB record. He threw a called third strike past Hideki Matsui with two outs.

RODRIGUEZ earns 38th save. »

Erick Aybar's two-run double in the first inning put the Angels ahead 3-0.

Andy Pettitte (13-13) lost for the ninth time in his last nine starts. He gave up four runs and nine hits in 4 2-3 innings.

At Detroit, Ryan Sweeney and Jack Cust hit back-to-back homers in the first inning for Oakland, which prevailed, 5-2.

Sean Gallagher came off the disabled list and pitched four hitless innings for the A's, who have won four of five.

Oakland scored three runs in the fourth to take a 5-0 lead.

Armando Galarraga (13-8) allowed five runs and eight hits in four innings for Detroit.

At Seattle, Ichiro Suzuki and Raul Ibanez both had four hits in Seattle's win over Texas, 6-7. AP

Milo Marathon races to North Luzon

AFTER TWO SUNDAYS IN THE Visayas, the 32nd National Milo Marathon travels to Northern Luzon with the staging of the 10-k leg in San Fernando, La Union this Sunday.

More than 4,000 runners will assume the 6 a.m. starting gun and the 11:40-minute race that will pass through the city's main streets and end in front of the city hall.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's divisions will earn P10,000, P6,000 and P4,000, respectively, and slots in the grand finals on Nov. 30 in Manila, where they will match running skills against fellow provincial champions and other qualifiers for the top prize of P75,000.

Aside from the 21K event, a 5K fun run and 3K for kids are also on tap for students and running enthusiasts.

An added attraction is the cheerdance competition to be participated in by San Fernando City students.

"We're expecting another exciting and interesting race because provincial runners in Northern and Central Luzon are entering action," said Ronald Ayp and Milo Executive for Sports Pat Gee-Ong.

Gee-Ong said they are eyeing at least 200,000 participants for the 2008 season. Last year, a total of 183,800 runners participated in 24 legs.

Organized by Joseph Durnick and supervised by race director Rudy Biscocho, the race is supported by San Fernando City Mayor Pablo C. Ortega and the city council headed by Vice Mayor Fauncan Q. Shaw.

The next stop of the 28-leg event will be in Laoag City on Sept. 21 before moving to Santiago City in Cagayan Valley on Sept. 28.

Hindi bitter then shift in Bitukon—Cagayan de Oro on Dec. 26 and Butuan on Nov. 9.

CLASS CHAMPS Top finishers of the recent Philippine Jaycees Inc. (PJI) Group of Companies-Puchan Golf Tournament held the honor with PJI president and CEO Jose Henri Lindayen (third from right) at the Calatagan course in Batangas. The first executive tournament for senior management of PJI companies and affiliates was topped by chief administrative officer Mike Jimenez with regional managers Felix Consiapoy and Renan Arevalo as runners-up.

SPORTS

Fil-Chinese quint routs Indons, gain semis

KOTA KINABALU—PHILIPPINE CHINESE FRIENDSHIP BASKETball League (PCFBL) bet by former Formula Shell player Alex Franco and ACER Kiki...hauled Portland...Indonesia, 91–45, Wednesday and secured a semifinal berth in the 52-and-over division of the 17th Asean Veteran Invitational Basketball Championship.

2008 Ryder Cup on Balls SkyCable 34

WITH THE TEAMS SET AFTER A COMPLETE, THE BIENNIAL GOLF tournament pitting top players from Europe against those from the United States is certain to draw even more interest. The second US squad will try to bounce back after losing five of the last six duels in the 2006 Ryder Cup battles. Balls on SkyCable 34 will show the event live from Sept. 19 to 23.

Torre wins anew, nears crown

Standings after seven rounds (GM unless noted)

2.5 points—**C. Sanz** (2)—Zhang Z. (CHN), Li C. (CHN), M. Hughes (AUS), M. Tarnobrzeski (POL), Gunawan (INA), Cheng W. (CHN), E. Sutovsky (ISR), Li Chao (CHN), Wang Yue (CHN), Yang (CHN), Sanikov (UKR), **R. Bacalso**

GRANDMASTER EUGENE TORRE OUTmaneuvered Orlando defending champion Li Chao in the seventh round Wednesday night, renewing the biggest stumbling block to his title aspirations in the third President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Cup international chess championship at the Dusit Thani Manila in Paranaque City.

Pushing back time again, the 56-year-old Torre replaced Lily Mercado in the middle game of the fourth to make the win and keep his one-point lead with just two rounds left.

The country's most successful chess player ever was famished after his eight-round victory when his opponent Chinese Lee finally yielded after 57 moves.

TORRE: Sixth win

Before beating Li, Torre halved the point with Ukrain poman GM Zhang. Zhang is 43 moves of the London system, the same opening he used to vault into the solo lead with wins over GMs Li Shilong and Wang Zhao Yifeng in the third and fourth rounds.

The draw with Zhang was the 12th recorded Torre's five after a string of five wins.

"It's a good feeling to be ahead with only two rounds left. I like my chances now," said Torre, who completed his GM requirements—the first to do so in Asia—in 1974.

Torre will now meet third seed GM Mikheil Kobliashvili of Georgia. He needs at least two draws in the last two rounds to snatch the US$15,000 top prize.

Zhang kept in touch with Torre with a win over GM Yang Nike of China. He faces top seed GM Marian Petrov of Kazakhstan in the other crucial eighth-round encounter.

Newly crowned Asian Grand Prix champion IM Julio Catalino Sadorra bounced back from a defeat to Michelbrink by scoring an upset win over compatriot GM Jayson Gonzales in the seventh round. He rose to 11th.

GMs Mark Paragua and Wesley So kept pace with Sadorra.

Paragua drew with IM John Paul Gomez in the sixth round and IM Rolly Nadera in the seventh while So, who is expected to break the Elo 2600 barrier in the Fide quarterly rating next month, beat No. 30 GM Richard Bitoon in the sixth round but drew with Wang Li of China in the seventh.

—Steve Silva, Correspondent

Slo-pitch softball opens Sunday; 8 teams in fold

THE 2008 MANILA SLO-PITCH SOFTBALL League comes off the ramps Sunday with eight teams seeing action at the Rizal Memorial Complex in Pasig City.

Defending champion Pete Pedido of Indon at softball president Jose Henri Gruillier is hand-pressed to keep in reserve since all the other teams have reinforced their lineups with past and present members of the RP Sea Boys.

Members, Sisters of Lee Shrine, Cambering, BPI MF Go Lucky and MOM as well as new entries Jim Rhine and PGA Hotel Technologies of University complete the eight-team field.

The Bobby Silverstein bottle the Hero Pedido faction on Sunday.

BPI MF Go Lucky will be led by sportscaster Anthony Suntay, Mike Cabana and actor Richard Gomez.

Honda supports greening of Aguinaldo Highway

The Honda Group of Companies in the Philippines through the Honda Foundation Inc (HFI), recently conducted a tree-planting activity along Km 60 Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City, in partnership with the Office of the Department of Agriculture of Tagaytay City government. Honda led planting of 75 seedlings of Norfolk Pines along the roadsides of Aguinaldo Highway to help build a greener community.

Leading the ceremonies are the president of the Honda Group of Companies namely Mr. Hiroshi Shimizu of Honda Cars Philippines, Inc.(HCPI), Mr. Kazuhiko Inoue of Honda Philippines, Inc.(HPI), Mr. Akira Ishida of Honda Parts Manufacturing Corporation (HPMC), Mr. Hiroshi Okamoto of Honda Trading Philippines, Enterprises (HTPI) and the officials of Tagaytay City Government led by City Mayor Abraham Tolentino and Vice Mayor Celerino Casimiro.

"The environment's welfare is everybody's business," said Hiroshi Shimizu. "With the growing concern on the excessive emission of carbon dioxide that results in climate changes and poor air quality, Honda is in continuous search for ways to attain sustainable mobility. For the benefit of future generations, Honda recognizes the importance of harmonious co-existence with the community and the environment" Kazuhiko Inoue added.

Honda enhances its environmental conservation activities to become a leading company in the development and use of environmentally sound practices and products.

In its previous environmental projects, the Honda Group of Companies has supported Sanlay Kalikasan's plea to rehabilitate La Mesa Watershed through the Adopt-a-Hectare project. In five years time, Honda associates have already planted over 5,000 trees within a 12-hectare badly-damaged forest.

Honda's thrust in protecting the environment is not only evident on its provision out on its manufacturing operations as well. More than being high quality and fun to use, Honda products are engineered to comply with the stringent European Emission Standards. Honda also exhibits comply with EURO 4 levels while Honda motorcycles with EURO 3 levels.

As reflected in its manufacturing processes, Honda ensures safe disposal of its waste materials by investing on state-of-the-art Universal Carburetor and wastewater treatment facilities. The Universal Carburetor treatment facility uses a special heating procedure to process solid waste into carbon without emitting carbon dioxide. Meanwhile, its wastewater treatment facility thoroughly recycles and demineralizes used water before discharge.

Honda will continue to lead the way in developing environmental innovations and positions for the welfare of the environment and future generations to come.

ten tech items

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Maroño • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nuñana

Peso weakens to 47.095:$1

BSP seen to temper currency's depreciation

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY SLIPPED TO 47.095 against the US dollar for the first time in a year, badly affected by a broadly rising greenback and escalating risk aversion among global investors.

The local currency weakened by P0.140 from Wednesday's close of 46.95, currency dealers said. Moderate intervention from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas tempered the peso's depreciation.

Investors' appetite on currencies, stocks and bonds from emerging markets were dampened by fears over larger-than-expected losses incurred by US investment banking giant Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. other currencies across Asia likewise tumbled yesterday, led by the South Korean won and Indian rupee.

Currency traders said the BSP's presence was "felt" during trade, particularly when US dollars were sold near the day's low at the Philippine Dealing System—a move that was meant to support the local currency.

But the dealers said that the central bank's intervention was "not too aggressive because, maybe, [the BSP is] also conserving its foreign reserves."

"Overall, it's still the dollar's strength that is weakening the local currency," said Chinatrust Philippines treasurer Roland Wanes.

He noted the US dollar weakened its clinch against the euro and the British pound.

Asianet said offshore investors were even more bullish on the US dollar at the expense of the peso. He noted that in the non-deliverable forward market, one-month peso-dollar rate yesterday was quoted at 47.78.

After breaching the critical barrier at 47, Asianet said, the market would likely test 47.30-47.35 in the next few days.

"For the moment, it's still an uphill for the dollar, but even the US may try to temper the appreciation," he said. "Even the market may turn cautious (on bounding dollars) because a deep correction may be possible."

Volume at the market climbed to $607 million from Wednesday's $568.3 million.

The peso is now trading at its lowest level against the US dollar since it traded 47.12 exactly 12 months ago.

"The market must consolidate before going higher," Rizal Bank treasurer Benjo Asebuc

PESO B4

Plan to convert subsidy into cash for poor gains support

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO CONVERT rice subsidies to the National Food Authority into direct cash transfers for the benefit of poor families has won the support of a senator.

"According to a study made by the Cabinet, the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program is more effective [in helping ease the burden of high food and fuel prices on the poor] than providing subsidy to the NFA," Sen. Edgardo Angara said.

The chair of the Senate committee on banks, financial institutions and currencies said he favored poor families would appreciate it better if the government were to help them by distributing direct cash allowances rather than subsidizing the NFA for the rice it sold.

The senator said, however, that the gov.

PLAN B4

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Gov't debt stock up** 0.9% to P3.96T in June /B3
- **Cement prices** seen rising to more than P200/bag /B8

Consumers reel from lower pay, job cuts, high prices

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE DETERIORATED in the third quarter as Filipino households felt the sharp pinch of high food and fuel prices, lower income and job cuts, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest survey.

But consumers are less pessimistic on prospects for the quarter ahead—the usually upbeat Christmas season is the country's longest holiday marked by brisk consumer spending.

The overall consumer confidence for the July-to-September period dropped to -32.8 percent, 9 index points lower compared to the previous quarter. It was also 20.2 index points weaker than the confidence index of the same period last year.

This was the lowest confidence level recorded since the BSP made its consumer expectations survey nationwide in the first quarter of 2007.

The confidence index is the difference between the percentage of respondents with a positive view and those with a negative view. A negative index thus indicates that pessimists outnumber optimists among Filipino households.

The outlook of consumers for the quarter ahead was also negative at -25.1 percent, but this was an improvement from the -26.9 percent index of the previous survey.

"Consumer sentiment remains hostile, but an improvement is seen for the fourth quarter," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said in a briefing yesterday.

Guinigundo added that economic growth would likely be affected by

CONSUMERS B4

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MetroPac offers stake in Landco to partners

By Elizabeth Sarolina Larson

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS Corp., the local holding firm of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd., has offered to sell 30.51 percent stake in Landco Pacific Corp. to its partners in the property firm.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange yesterday, MPIC president Jose Ma. E. Lim said the company and its joint venture partners in Landco—All Holdings Corp. led by Landco president Alfred Xerxes Burgos Jr. and Xerxes-Burgos in his personal capacity—agreed to subject Landco to a valuation process. This is to determine an updated estimation of the company under current circumstances and market conditions.

In the same disclosure, MPIC said it had agreed to provide Landco up to P500 million in short-term funding to enable it to meet maturing debts and finance working capital.

Upon completion of the third-party valuation of Landco, Lim said All Holdings and Xerxes-Burgos could send a notice to acquire MPIC's stake in Landco not later than Oct. 31, 2008. The valuation is expected to be completed on Oct. 15.

The following date could be extended no later than Nov. 30 if the Xerxes-Burgos group could settle the P500-million short-term funding provided by MPIC and find an investor to buyout MPIC, business sources said.

If the Xerxes-Burgos group would decide to acquire MPIC's stake within the timeframe given, the group should implement the buyout not later than Nov. 30. The cut-off date could be extended to Dec. 29 if the Xerxes-Burgos group would settle the short-term funding extended by MPIC on Landco and find an investor.

But if the Xerxes-Burgos group failed to give notice to acquire MPIC's stake or implement the plan during the period indicated, MPIC will have the right to buy the entire stake of the Xerxes-Burgos group in Landco. The group, however, may keep 100 percent of the current outstanding shares of Landco.

All Holdings and Xerxes-Burgos own 49 percent of Landco.

MPIC chair Manuel V. Pangilinan earlier said the company was undertaking a strategic review of its investments in Landco in view of the stiff competition in the industry.

Landco reported it is recording income of P17.9 million in the first half, down from P100.9 million last year.

"We are up against significant large property developers although these past many years, Landco has developed its niche market, which is leisure development," Pangilinan said earlier.

Side agreements

BANKING SAVVINESS EDGES THE former is expected to ratify soon the controversial Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement.

The concerns raised by some senators about the possible violation of our Constitution by some of Japan's provisions appear to have been addressed by the exchange of notes between the Philippine and Japanese governments.

The provisions relate to the treatment of Japanese investments in the country and the entry into Philippine territorial waters of Japanese factory ships.

The notes state, in effect, that Japan will support our Government in the implementation of these two items.

This notwithstanding, senators stressed the need to renegotiate the treaty, a prospect that could delay its ratification without any assurance that Japan will give in to the Philippines' demands.

Although not formally included in the treaty, the side letters will be considered part of it.

In the future, if any disagreement arises in the interpretation of these provisions, the two governments can refer to these communications for guidance.

Standard contract

Side letters that aim to explain or clarify certain provisions in an agreement are also used in business, especially by companies that use standard contract forms.

Penned by highly skilled commercial lawyers, these documents contain all the terms and conditions that will govern the company's transactions.

The prices, fees, costs and other monetary considerations are spelled out clearly to make sure there are no misunderstandings about the obligations of the contracting parties.

Every possible incident that may arise in the course of the performance of the contract is anticipated and given the corresponding treatment or remedy.

Nothing is left to chance, because the company prepares the contract, its provisions are, of course, protective of its interests.

Often, the contract is presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. If the contract cannot accept to terms, he can ask for an amendment, but it is doubtful if his request will be granted.

The usual excuse given to justify the refusal is, it is company policy to treat all customers alike and amending the contract to suit a particular customer would create a bad precedent.

It would compel the company to give a similar treatment to all other customers, including those who may have earlier signed the contract but later have asked the adjustment.

That could mean additional expenses for the company.

Business practice

But the resistance to changing standard contracts does not apply to high-worth customers (read: those who have the potential to bring in more business), or those who have strong political or social influence that the company can ill afford to ignore.

Giving in to the request for an amendment of the contract could, in the long run, make good business sense.

So how does the company make the VIP customer happy without having to amend the standard contract it presents to the public?

The company enters into a side agreement or issues a "comfort letter" to the customer that modifies or deletes the provisions that do not meet the customer's approval.

Except for the items mentioned in this side document, all the other terms and conditions of the contract will remain in force.

Usually, only two copies of the side agreement are prepared and signed, one for the company and the other goes to the customer.

With this arrangement, the company can politely say (hopefully with a straight face) that all its customers are covered by the same contract.

But it better make sure the side agreement is kept under the tightest lock and key.

Confidential

If a copy of the letter falls into the wrong hands, the company could find itself in serious trouble with host of consumers who may get wind of the double dealing.

In the face of discriminatory pricing, the company would be hard-pressed explaining the preferential treatment amidst values that it wrote off income taxes fairly and squarely.

The leak could come from both sides. Its source could be a disgruntled or dismissed employee who wants to get even with the company.

Or in an unguarded moment or extroverted in giving a good deed, the customer himself may spill the beans on what it means to be kept in utmost confidence.

In this easy and gossip-prone society of ours, no disclosure in the closet remains under wraps for a long time. Sooner or later, business secrets become public knowledge.

When caught with its pants down, the company can either apologize for the inappropriate conduct and offer to "compensate" the affected customer, or make a scapegoat one of the person who created the side arrangement and, if the damage to the company's credibility is serious, fire him.

In business and in government, one rule is scrupulously observed when it comes to covering its ass or secret agreements. Don't get caught.

The consequences for violating that maxim can be severe on the offender's personal life and professional career.

(For feedback, please write to expat.alexa@inquirer.com.ph.)

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Office of the President

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PROPERTY LOCATION	*Type	Floor Area (sq. m.)	Lot Area (sq.m.)	Selling Price	REMARKS
Block 2 Lot 7 Vila Milagrosa Townhomes, Brgy. San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna	TH	85.20	28.00	855,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 3 Lot 18 Vila Milagrosa Townhomes, Brgy. San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna	TH	81.00	19.00	855,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 3 Lot 19 Vila Milagrosa Townhomes, Brgy. San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna	TH	81.00	19.00	855,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 102, Lot 5 Acacia Park Homes, Brgy. Tanauan, Calamba City	SH	44.00	60.00	374,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 2 Lot 16 Acacia Park Homes, Brgy. Tanauan, Calamba City	SH	44.00	60.00	374,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 2 Lot 15 Acacia Park Homes, Brgy. Tanauan, Calamba City	SH	44.00	60.00	374,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 1 Lot 1 Ambulante St. Ayala Heights, Brgy. Cuta, Batangas City	SH	100.00	120.00	1,000,000.00	Vacant
Block 5 Lot 20 Vila Milagrosa Townhomes, Brgy. San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna	TH	81.00	19.00	855,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 3 Lot 5 Vila Milagrosa Townhomes, Brgy. San Vicente, San Pedro, Laguna	TH	85.20	28.00	855,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 4 Lot 9 Acacia Park Homes, Brgy. Tanauan, Calamba City	SH	44.00	60.00	374,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
Block 5 Lot 2 Sta. St. Compostela Country Homes, Brgy. Dolores, Compostela City	SH	50.00	60.00	450,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing
LOT 6 BLK 6 LUTEA ESTATES (Lutea St. Brgy. Tanauan, C. Batangas, Batangas)	RS	70.00	97.00	600,000.00	80% Mortgage Financing

*TH - House & Lot
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(SGD.) RAFAEL P. DE LOS SANTOS
Vice President
Asset Management and Disposition Group

Gov't debt stock up 0.9% to ₱3.96T in June

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT'S outstanding debt rose in June from that in May, buoyed by fresh borrowings and the depreciation of the peso and other currencies against the US dollar.

The debt stock as of end-June reached ₱3.96 trillion, up 0.9 percent from the previous month's ₱3.93 trillion, the Bureau of the Treasury reported yesterday.

If the amount were to be divided among the country's estimated population of 90.4 million this year, each Filipino would have a debt share of ₱43,805.

Of the latest debt figure, ₱2.3 trillion is liabilities were denominated in peso. This was higher by 0.3 percent from the previous month's ₱2.297 trillion.

Obligations denominated in other currencies accounted for the balance of ₱1.66 trillion. It marked a 1.9-percent increase from the ₱1.63 trillion recorded in May.

The government borrows locally by selling Treasury bills and bonds to the domestic capital market. On the other hand, the government conducts foreign borrowings by floating sovereign bonds in the international capital market, and by tapping official development assistance (ODA) from multilateral and bilateral lenders.

The month-on-month increase in peso-denominated debt was a result of the net issuance of government securities, the BTr said. This meant that the amount of new issues issued by the government to date was more than the amount of maturing obligations it settled during the month.

Also, debts denominated in foreign currencies increased because of the depreciation of the peso and other currencies against the dollar.

The BTr said the depreciation of other currencies, such as yen and euro, against the dollar increased the government's outstanding debt.

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Growth Fund - Peso	0.0000	0.0000
Equity Fund - Peso	0.0000	0.0000
Asian Equity Fund - US Dollar	0.0000	0.0000

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Typhoons put a damper on BSP inflation forecast

Official says, however, rate would not exceed 13% in Sept.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INCREASE IN LOCAL CONsumer prices in September may exceed the 12.3 percent yearon-year rise in August due to the adverse effects of recent typhoons, dampening the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' prospects of an early peak in inflation.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said in a briefing yesterday that the September inflation rate could rise to 12.6 or 12.7 percent because of recent weather disturbances.

"Without the typhoons, inflation could have peaked in August. But because of the typhoons, that will really send prices higher, particularly of food," Guinigundo said.

But he said the country's inflation rate would not hit 13 percent.

"There are other areas like Mindanao which were not affected by the typhoon. Rice [prices] continue to go down. NFA (National Food Authority) continues to receive shipments of imported rice, humbashing key distribution outlets with more rice," Guinigundo said.

"So it may rise to 12.6 percent or 12.7 percent [this month] and then decline afterward," he said. "It won't reach 13 percent. It's being mean."

Investment bank Development Bank of Singapore, on the other hand, expects inflation to peak at 13 percent in October due to the lingering effects of the spike in fuel and food prices in previous months.

"It has been the case globally. food and fuel prices are the only two things that have really surprised on the run-up in inflation, and indications now are that these trends are at least stabilizing, if not reversing," DBSR said in its latest assessment of the Philippine economy.

But while global food and fuel prices appear favorable, DBS said these would not affect immediately on domestic inflation, and would only be felt in November.

Oil companies do not immediately adjust domestic prices of basic or other global fuel prices cheap.

The BSP expects to get a better picture of inflation when the Monetary Board meets again on October 9.

Guinigundo said policy makers would continue to keep an eye out for global oil prices even if recent trends have been favorable.

When global oil prices hovered on the light-sweet crude benchmark fell below the crucial $100 per barrel mark, many analysts said the commodity prices may have peaked.

Guinigundo said the Philippines has an average inventory of oil for 70 days, which is enough to cover 10 months.

He added that the start of the overseas Filipino worker remittance season by November would give the country enough foreign exchange buffer to global price volatility.

The market expects the BSP to raise its benchmark interest rates by as much as 50 basis points more this year to fight 17-year high inflation rates despite the struggle it's economic economic growth. With reports from Michelle V. Rosco

Déjà vu for oppressed fisherfolk

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

LAST SEPT. 8, ON THE BIRTHDAY of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, 300 fisherfolk from Batangas and Ilocos in the southern and northern coast of Cavite held a floral parade.

The objective was not to celebrate the Virgin Mary's birthday but to protest the offshore exploration of Nido-based Energy Ltd. In solidarity of Australian firm Anzo Resorgil in the Cebu-Bohol Strait. It was hoped that the Virgin Mary would help their cause for justice.

Almost a year ago, on Nov. 28, 2007, fisherfolk leaders from the Pinamungahan Fishermen and Aquatic Resources Management Council on the southwestern coast of Cebu similarly protested the oil and gas exploratory drilling by Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. (Japex) in Yahon Strait. They did not protest the exploration per se, but the scant consultation they got from having different with the exploration was going on.

Instead of getting P5,000 to P7,500 a month, as confirmed by two independent surveys, they were given only a sack of rice worth P1,000. Many of these who protested were threatened with no rice at all. We do not wish the sad experience of the Pinamungahan fishers to be repeated in Silonga and Argao. For this would indeed be a very sad déjà vu ("reliving experience") for the Cebu fisherfolk.

Tubon Strait

It is useful to review here what happened in the Pinamungahan fishers so that the same mistakes will not be made.

Department of Energy (DOE) Visayas Director Jeronimo Lalata stated that Nordana is currently doing a location site survey to determine exactly where any actual drilling is to be started by the first quarter of 2009. DOE's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) has already given its clearance for this survey.

In March 2007, the Pinamungahan fisherfolk, led by its chair Arben Dumon, first asked for just compensation for their displacement from the Japex drilling that was to take place six months later. When they were consistently ignored and the drilling started, they went faced with a choice between violence and non-violence.

Since the majority opted for nonviolence, they chose "hablas, no balas" during elections. And during the long period between elections, they chose "brazos, no bonllo" to seek justice.

So write, they did.

Last November, they sent letters to Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, Environment Secretary Jose Atienza Jr., Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Presidential Agrarian and Fisheries Council (PAFC) Undersecretary Bernie Fondevilla and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Director Macoleta Sarmiento II.

A month later, on Dec. 12, Dumon was able to argue his case before the NSFC Committee and Fisheries, where all the above personalities were represented.

A task force was created, headed by BFAR, which would "look over the Christmas holidays, if necessary." A third meeting was scheduled on, with the recommendation that the compensation to the displaced fisherfolk should be increased.

Today, nine months later, not one single cent in centavo has been given. The Japex exploration has finished, and there appears to be no news on the government's plan to answer the wrong that was done to the Pinamungahan fisherfolk.

The non-violent fisherfolk are soon misled by their more aggressive colleagues for having too much faith in a system that has betrayed them. Some are being encouraged to take the "hombo, not brave" path. The government can still give justice to the Pinamungahan fisherfolk, so that non-violence will prevail over violence.

Cebu-Bohol Strait

On the other side of the island is a case where government can act swiftly to that extreme disillusionment with government does not set in.

Unlike in Pinamungahan, where the results of two independent surveys were required in the settlement through a third NSFC formulated survey done when the fishers had already been displaced, a determined NAFC survey should be immediately conducted before the normal drilling takes place in 2009.

That way it will be clear who are entitled to the displacement compensation, which will be given at the appropriate date level.

In Pinamungahan, since the displacement had already taken place with the unjust compensation of a P1,000 sack of rice per family per month, some unscrupulous individuals probably thought that they would continue to take advantage of those poor fisherfolk. They did, and have to be unwonded.

Recommendation

The Silonga and Argao fisherfolk should not commit the same mistake. Nor should the government. The appropriate action on the survey and the necessary preparatory activities prior to actual drilling should be undertaken immediately.

As for the Pinamungahan fisherfolk, it is not too late. These fisherfolk have waged their quest for justice at the NAFC level. And so far, exactly nine months after the survey, nothing happened.

When I talked to DENR-EMB Director Julius Amadeo yesterday to inquire about just displacement compensation for both the Pinamungahan as well as the Silonga and Argao fisherfolk, he said the DOE was in charge.

The agreement for the oil drilling that caused the displacement was under the DOE mandate. It is therefore recommended that both groups of fisherfolk go beyond NSFC and take their case directly to Energy Secretary Reyes for action.

The agreement for the oil drilling that caused the displacement was under the DOE mandate. It is therefore recommended that both groups of fisherfolk go beyond NSFC and take their case directly to Energy Secretary Reyes for action.

(The author is chair of Agrinetwork, former governor for presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. As inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agrinetwork@yahoo.com or cellphone 0919-9503713.)

Domestic air travel up 13% despite expensive crude oil

By Rico T. Olchondra

DESPITE SOARING OIL PRICES, AIRLINE passenger traffic within the Philippines grew by 13 percent to 5.6 million in the first half of 2008 compared with 5.17 million in the same period last year.

Data from the Civil Aeronautics Board showed that Cebu Pacific carried 2.57 million paying passengers between January and June this year compared with 2.26 million in the same period last year.

Flag carrier Philippine Airlines, on the other hand, carried 2.25 million from 1.98 million in the same age period.

Air Philippines carried 823,160 passengers as of June from 544,800 in the first six months last year.

Asian Spirit carries, meanwhile, carried 250,000 passengers from 168,000 during the comparative period.

South East Asian Airlines (SEAIR), which Flies mostly to tourist destinations, flew 138,000 passengers in the same period last year.

SEAIR earlier said it flew about 141,000 people in the first half of 2008. To clarify its numbers, LAS said its record only reflects paying passengers.

The airline companies and the CAB attributed the increase to the sale of seats at cheaper tickets and additional planes.

"For us, at least, we can't really separate the effect of increased capacity with new sales because every time we take delivery of our aircraft we add flights and introduce new routes and seats were possible that it has helped to minimize the market," Cebu Pacific VP for marketing and product Candice Iyog said in a telephone interview.

CAB deputy director Dionesio Barcenas Jr. added in a separate interview that the numbers indicate a good reception of airline promotions among passengers.

"This is a good sign because despite the record oil escalation due to high fuel prices and inflation, capacity expansion and seat sales helped grow the number," he said.

SEAIR president Avelino Zaguirre, meanwhile, earlier said in a statement that high fuel costs had resulted in a general slowdown in the travel market.

But he said SEAIR was fighting back by intensifying its state-of-the-art reservations and e-ticketing system where individuals can easily purchase online tickets to the airline's 19 destinations.

Starting Sept. 15, SEAIR's improved website (www.flyseairasia.com) will offer the lowest available online fares as well as year-round sales promos.

Consumers reel from lower ...

From page B1

for worst-consumer sentiment.

But he noted that sentiment could improve three months from now with the expected reversal in the inflation trend and the softening of global oil and non-oil commodity prices.

"You have to see that this is an issue of relative spending from a springboard of high economic growth. So, even slowdown or tempering of growth is still within the country's growth trend of 4 to 5 percent," said BSP Managing Director Cyd Tuazon-Amadeo.

The third quarter BSP survey was conducted on July 1 to 15 with a sample size of 2,990 households representative of the actual distribution of income in the database of the National Statistics Office.

Majority of the respondents (57.5 percent) were from the lower-income group, or those with less than P15,000 in family income.

The middle income group, with income level of P15,000 to P29,000, comprised 33.6 percent, while the high-income group, or those earning P30,000 and above, accounted for 8.9 percent.

The survey also showed that, for the quarter ahead, consumers expected an increase in expenditures on basic goods and services — particularly food, transportation and fuel.

Spending cuts are also expected mostly on such non-essential items as clothing, footwear and communications, apart from education and medical care. Doris C. Dumlao

Plan ...

From page B1

cement should come up with a definite list of poor families who would be covered by the state's financial assistance.

To avoid running resources, authorities should also come up with solid criteria for determining the beneficiaries, channeling the assistance directly to them as much as possible.

The Department of Finance earlier expressed its support for the plan to reduce subsidies to the NPA and increase allowances to the poor.

"It is a good idea," Finance Undersecretary Jeremiah Paul Jr. earlier said. "The government is inclined to do targeted subsidies anyway."

In granting direct allowances to the poor, the people will have the means to decide where to spend their money on, said Paul, who heads the DOF unit in charge of monitoring the financial performance of government-owned and -controlled corporations, including the NPA.

This will enable poor families to buy the stuff they really need, he added.

Data from the DOF showed that the government spent P1 billion from January to July this year to subsidize the NPA. The agency sees the subsidy to import rice and cover the expected inefficiency in domestic production.

Peso ...

From page B1

said, "I think the market is long on US dollars."

In a new statement from New York, credit watchdog Standard & Poor's said it had kept Lehman on negative credit watch.

"We will continue to monitor the company for a possible downgrade following Lehman's late assessment, larger-than-expected third-quarter loss and proposed asset sales to boost capital and reduce remaining net assets exposures," said S&P analyst Scott Sprinzen.

S&P said Lehman's expected loss of $7.2 billion for the quarter ending Aug. 31, was significantly larger than it had expected.

Apart from business activity being broadly weak, the ongoing deterioration in the market valuation of Lehman's residential mortgage and commercial real estate assets resulted in a gross mark-to-market adjustment totaling a massive $7.8 billion, the S&P analyst said.

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BUSINESS

DENR seeks ₱350M for geohazard maps

By Amy R. Borras

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources is seeking another P350 million in funds to complete the country's geohazard mapping next year.

For this year, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza said the government had allocated at least P60 million for the mapping project, which aimed to forestall potential damages from landslides and flooding by identifying the conditions of each locality, barangay or province.

Geohazard maps provide information on areas prone to landslides, liquefaction, subsidence and other potential calamities. Those also identify potential areas for relocation for residents of areas prone to floods, landslides and other natural calamities.

"This is one of our priority concerns. That is why we have first started the scheduled completion of the project to next year from the original target of 2012," Atienza said in a briefing.

As of this month, Atienza said the geohazard mapping project was already 75 percent complete. He said his department expected to spend about P1 billion for the project.

The geohazard maps will have a scale of 1:10,000 (1 meter in map for every 10,000 meters in land). The DENR, through the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, is also set to create a map with 1:10,000 scale for so-called critical areas, such as Leyte and Baguio.

The environment chief, stressing the significance of the project, said the national geohazard map would aid both the government and private companies in making development plans for certain areas.

Atienza said geohazard maps were not meant to scare but to identify geologic hazards so that their effects could be mitigated and loss of lives and properties could be avoided.

The SILB earlier explained that due to the country's geologic setting and geographic location, it ranks among the most vulnerable to disasters caused by natural phenomenon.

Cement prices seen rising to more than ₱200/bag

Increases in H1 ranged from 3% to 5%

By Abigail L. Ho

THE RISING COSTS OF RAW MATERIALS and other manufacturing inputs are expected to jack up the price of cement to more than P200 a bag within the year.

According to an industry source, prices of construction materials, in general, were likely to increase during the remaining months of the year, so cement prices were not exclusive of production costs.

The price of cement, in particular, may breach the P200 a bag mark, as local manufacturers were poised to raise their prices by about P20 a bag, the source said.

The Department of Trade and Industry's price monitoring as of the first week of September showed that a 40-kilogram bag of cement cost between P190 and P195.

Based on available National Statistics Office data, cement prices had risen by only 3-5 percent during the first half of the year—a small movement compared to the 20-percent price hike in Indonesia and the 50-percent price increase in Vietnam.

Cement Manufacturers' Association of the Philippines president Ernesto Ordoñez confirmed the slow increase in cement prices here, but also noted the relatively small size of the Philippine market.

He said that for the eight years prior to 2007, cement demand had been steady at 12 million tons a year, rising in 2007 to only 13 million tons.

This, however, was still way below the industry's current production capacity of around 22 million tons, he said.

He said this was partly the reason local cement manufacturers had not been able to raise prices in levels that would allow them to recoup cost under-recoveries.

But the industry source said local manufacturers might have to implement a "modest increase" in cement prices just to keep up with their costs.

Coal prices, which accounted for about 40 percent of a cement producer's variable cost, were significantly to blame for the need to hike cement prices, the source said.

The source said the price of Indonesian coal had increased by 81 percent to $53 a ton, from $29.30 a ton in December 2005.

Although benchmarked on crude prices, the source said coal prices had risen to higher levels than oil starting January. Also, coal prices remained "at an extremely high level" vis-à-vis oil prices, which had started to soften.

Biodiesel producers scramble for market share

WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2-percent mandated biodiesel blend (BD) set for February, biodiesel manufacturers are scrambling for a slice of the market.

From interview presenting Chemrez Technologies Inc. chief operating officer Dean Lim Jr. said there were about eight biodiesel manufacturers accredited by the Department of Energy.

But the increase in the mandatory blend to 2 percent from the current 1 percent could create more players to enter the industry, he said, raising the possibility of substandard products entering the country.

"What the industry is trying to avoid is the entry of cheap and nasty producers. There's a possibility that the [coco methyl ester] cheap will produce to not as par with the Philippine National Standards," he explained.

To avert the entry of sub-quality goods, he said the Department of Energy and industry stakeholders have been conducting meetings on how to go about the research committee in the 2 percent blend.

The group met for the third time yesterday to discuss ways to prevent the entry of manufacturers that could possibly derail the entire biofuels program by producing adulterated CME.

A technical working group was formed to ensure that all CME to be sold in the market would meet existing PNS standards, he said. Abigail L. Ho

Gov't taps $18-M grant from Australia for survey

THE GOVERNMENT IS SET TO NEGOtiate with the Australian Agency for International Development by an $18-million grant that will be used to survey the country's mineral deposits.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Horacio Ramos said in a briefing that this survey which forms part of a bigger geological survey, can significantly help the government identify where the deposits are and what type of minerals are present.

"We want [local and international] mining firms to know which areas have high mineral potential to attract further and bigger [mining] investments," Ramos said.

Ramos explained that the geological survey which is focused on identifying mineralized and mineral deposits in each location, will consist of an aeromagnetic survey which is geophysical, geological mapping, and a geochemical survey.

The aeromagnetic survey, for which the $18-million grant will be used, measures the magnetic characteristics of rocks. If the area is highly magnetic, it is likely that there is big mineral potential in that location.

Ramos added that they are also working other sources of funds in the form of loans and grants from other multinational institutions and countries to begin the two other surveys.

In the same briefing, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza stressed the importance of the geological survey.

"We should have a national picture where our wealth deposits are located. This [mapping] should be made so the approval of mining activities will be done in the most transparent and best way," Atienza said. "It will also give us an accurate position of what our country has."

Atienza said the government has no such map.

He added that the location of the country's mineral deposits should be public knowledge to give everybody a fair chance to bid for potential mining projects and partnerships. Amy R. Borras

15th National PR Congress: Envisioning a Better World

Our world is forever changing. So does its people. And so does the practice of Public Relations.

In the early 1900s, Edward Louis Bernays, who is considered the founding father of modern Public Relations (PR), along with Ivy Lee, defined public relations "as a management function which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organization ... followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance."

Today, such definition still applies. However, the practice of PR is never confined within the said description. It now evolves along with its people and, not to miss, with global transformation.

Over the years, our world has grasped technological advancements that have affected the lifestyle of the human race. Some have become detached to the earth. Others still attached. While the rest have, to some extent, gone apathetic with global concerns. And this is where Public Relations enters.

Globally, PR practitioners have exerted efforts in bringing the public and organizations closer to Mother Earth by initiating projects and programs that would effectively build worldwide consensus over the protection of the consuming environment.

In the Philippines alone, the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP), a non-stock, non-profit organization established on February 18, 1957 by leading PR practitioners in the country, organizes its 15th National PR Congress with the theme PLANET PEOPLE PARTNERSHIP.

It aims to advance the practice of public relations by promoting by participants with points and information that is vital in building strong relationships in the PR world with proper concern for the environment.

And for the past 15 years, the series of PR Congress have always been a major endeavor of the PRSP to fulfill its mission of generating public confidence in the profession by promoting high ethical practice and encouraging high standards of public service, as well as playing the active role in all matters affecting the practice of public relations.

Since saving the planet is a global effort, the 15th PR Congress, slated on September 18 to 19, 2006 at Makati International is Makati City boasts of world-class speakers who will discuss the perceptible trend between the environment and the PR industry.

As its keynote speaker, Christopher Graves, who is President and CEO of Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, will be flying in from Hong Kong to Manila to discuss "Advancing Environmental Causes through PR" on the first day of the congress.

Other internationally-recognized speakers who will join Graves are: Gina Lopez, Chairperson of ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc. "Leveraging Partnerships: Changing the Face of Communities to Support Environmental Projects;" Ilse Hernandez, Campaign Director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, for "Forging Alliances with Environment Watchdogs."

Elena Sorun, Chairperson of Earth Day Network Philippines, Former SENR Secretary for "Understanding the Local Context of Climate Change: Where the Shots at for Environment Today as Viewed from the Philippine Perspective," H.E. Alistair Ian Mackintosh, Head of Delegation of European Commission in the Philippines, for "With The Talk: European Union Turns Philippine Companies Green," Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan, Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees of WWF-Philippines, for "PR Best Practices: Mastering the Art of Conservation by Partnering for Transient and Meaningful Collaborations," and Michael de Pozsonby Director of Ground Environment Australia, for "What's That Again: How to Effectively Communicate your Environmental Programs."

"Through the congress," says Julie Soliman, this year's chairperson of the Congress, "PRSP captures global partnership in fulfilling environmental issues that would eventually save Mother Nature."

With the current theme of the PR congress, the Public Relations Society of the Philippines has rightly expanded its mission of building sturdy human relationships to building humans as responsible stewards of God's creation.

Indeed, the world's forever changing. But the recent changes have been appalling. As citizens of the planet, we must act as one and make this choice...

... Go green. Save Mother Earth!

For more info on the PR Congress, you may contact the PRSP office at 636-0611 or email them at prsociety@prsp.ph or at prcongress.prsp@yahoo.com.

BUSINESS Friday

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Business/Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Why the need to advertise advertising

By Rogee Pe
Contributor

YOU ARE WATCHING TV AND THE show goes on and on without commercial interruptions.

You are reading a newspaper and all you see are articles and columns.

You are listening to the radio and all you hear are news reports and announcements.

You drive around the city and all you see are billboard frames with nothing on them.

You are surfing the net and all you get are endless streams of bloggers' angst.

Picture a city without advertising. Many media outfits will close in such a city. Most media firms' main source of revenues is advertising.

Advertising can be a barometer of a country's growth. The more progressive and sophisticated it becomes, the more you can gauge where the economy is heading.

A STREET in Vienna became a 'ghost town' when people removed all ad signs in a street for two weeks.

For all the revenues and economic benefits that it brings, advertising the industry seems to be largely ignored considering it is the lifeblood of any ad agency. Advertising advertising seems not to be not on the priority list of the very makers of ads, which is facing serious budget cutbacks every year.

Who'll give something back, re-energize or bring the excitement back to the industry that is always on the receiving end of every economic crunch?

Prior to the financial crisis that hit most of Asian tiger economies in 1997, the Indonesian fifa launched an industry-wide competition to convince marketers why they should invest more in advertising and assert its role in business and nation building.

BUSINESS 2

A tale of two cities: Customizing your marketing program

By Francis J. Tu
Contributor

IN THE PHILIPPINES THE year 2005 is a year of national pride. The country achieved quite a feat when it both hosted and attained the status of overall champion in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games. The country won a total of 291 medals, 113 of which were gold. Following in its heels were Thailand with 283 medals and Vietnam with 228.

In the year 2005, Shopwise has grown to four stores in seven years. This moderate pace of store development is about to change as the company prepares for its next small feat by opening two stores in one year for this startup company. 2005 was to be a breakthrough year when it would leap frog from four to six stores. The opening of these two new stores represents the accelerated momentum of growth of the chain. It also configures a major development that would see the company opening two stores in one year or cutting over 22 stores the following year.

Shopwise Antipolo is slated to open in June of 2005, followed closely by the opening of Shopwise in Harrison Plaza Mall in Manila in September of the same year. The back-to-back store openings are seen more challenging when one considers the vast differences in the markets that these two stores would serve.

Antipolo is known for the Cathedral that houses Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. It is a city of pilgrims, contemplations, tourists and traders, artists and artisans. It is a highly progressive and flourishing city with a population of about 500,000.

Manila, on the other hand, is the country's capital. It is a highly urbane and decentralized city. Manila is considered to be the seat of government and home to some of the top hotels, commercial establishments and major institutions in the country such as Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Rizal Memorial Complex, Manila Zoo, Metropolitan Museum, GOB PEGS, World Trade Center, among others. It has a population of about 1.4 million.

SHOPWISE Antipolo (above) and Shopwise Manila (left)

A one-size-fits-all approach is no longer suitable for today's markets

Up until this time, a formula for store openings has been successfully developed. However, it is clear that a cookie cutter or a one-size-fits-all approach in the opening of these two stores would not serve the best interests of the target customers.

A PAGE B2-3

Friends boost women's confidence–study

EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT American women recently surveyed by Tupperware, a global firm in food storage, preparation and serving products, as part of its recently launched Chain of Confidence international campaign, said that their support network of girlfriends will carry them successfully throughout their different lifestages.

Only 15 percent of the women said looking good will help them face life more confidently. Tupperware's Chain of Confidence campaign celebrates the powerful bonds of friendship that connect women together and the self-confidence derived from these relationships.

"Given the fact that majority of Filipino women are in greater need of higher education and economic empowerment than their more affluent American counterparts, it is imperative that the Filipino cultivate not just their looks but also their networth of girlfriends for them to successfully handle the lifelong challenges of womanhood," says Yvette A. Navarro, the second Filipina and second female executive to assume the post of country manager in Tupperware's 41 year corporate life in the Philippines. "That's why we're enthusiastic about adopting the Chain of Confidence campaign in our countries."

In the Philippines, Tupperware has identified a charity like OSM Kapuso Foundation that helps uplift the plight of less-privileged women afflicted with cancer and has donated P200,000 from the proceeds of sales of Tupperware products specially handled for the program which the public has been called on to support by way of purchase.

Additional findings from the Tupperware survey conducted by a professional US research firm polled over 300 women across North America ages 18 and over include the following:

- 88 percent of women would rather give up shopping for a year than give up their female friends for a year.
- 51 percent of women agree that most women rely too much on their appearance to make them feel more confident.
- 85 percent percent of women feel that they are able to encourage someone solve a problem.
- 63 percent of women feel more confident when they relate better with their peers.

Celebrity and mother of two daughters, Brooke Shields, is partnering with Tupperware as the spokesperson for the Chain of Confidence campaign. Shields is doing a challenge to women everywhere to share their own inspirational stories of how friendships and connecting with other women has impacted their confidence on the new website, ChainofConfidence.com.

A troubling perception of PR

By Antonio H. Benedicto
Contributor

BOOK REVIEW

A PROFESSOR FOR MANY YEARS AT DE La Salle University and a practitioner of public relations for more than 35 years, Dr. Lucia E. Santiago tackles a subject threatening to disrupt the practice of true public relations in the country.

"Staying True, Playing Tough" is his fifth book on public relations. Striving to a clear and concise manner, the author dwells on the ethical challenges facing the practice of public relations today. He laments over the most serious problems of the profession. But this is no sloppy fix-it-makes-bold suggestions on how the situation can be solved. It is to reflect the power of its own practitioners to seek effective solutions that may still save the practice.

To one who has been in the practice for as long as the author, this is a tall order. It can only be done with the full cooperation of the most prestigious practitioners. PR men in this country are aware of the problems facing the profession yet seem helpless to do anything about them. Is it because they lack the courage to express their own convictions? Is it because they fear losing high-retainer fees?

PR rose as businessman

When the public relations man who is also a businessman reaches the crossroads, will he go left or turn right? The public relations practitioners must realize that more than a profession, he is a professional. Monetary considerations are not his only goals in life. In an age when public relations practitioners continue to be employed for the wrong reasons by businessmen who mistake the left for the right, will they go along with the charade?

The ability to write coupled with a lot of friends from media appears to be the only criteria in choosing a public relations practitioner. Ethical considerations fly out of the window. The ability to see and reconcile corporate behavior and actions to the acceptable norms of conduct is never taken into account.

Guiding the fires

A good PR man must be able to guide the organization on its day-to-day deal-ings with the various groups (target publics) the organization comes into contact with by virtue of its business operations. It takes years of experience in the field for the professional to gain proper insight into the problems of an organization. He must learn how to cue research properly as a means to solve a business problem. He must know how to put together a working program and implement it.

Strategic, in this scholarly work, provides a good glimpse of how a true professional in the practice must behave. And he is not alone in his views. The well-known author, Joe Marconi, in his book, "Public Relations the Complete Guide," says:

"The (public relations) person in many situations is second only to the CEO in the force or source of an organization in the most important constituent groups. Additionally, as a front-line contact person, fielding questions and receiving comments from people outside of the organization, the public relations person is a critical source of information about what members of the public are thinking or saying about the organization. He or she has an open line to those that management seeks to influence, and it is a line that must be managed with care."

Tragically, some of the so-called captains of business and industry do not see it that way. They employ so-called PR men for the wrong reasons. They think that the work of public relations men is in front of cheap publicists of movie stars and circus performers. You can count with the fingers of your hands those industrialists who understand and appreciate the work of public relations.

The net effect of this is that the PR man simply becomes a space broker, out to make money out of press releases prepared by and certified by those enjoying their glamorous. And it doesn't stop there. Those in schools with certain questionable elements in the press can solicit those characters' support in waging a war against a competitor.

The book ends with a strong appeal for public relations men to assume a course that will pick up the challenge to invigorate the profession. In the book's finest chapter, he hurls an admonition for PR men to lead in accord with the tenets of a real profession. Propaganda designed to destroy a product or a person is not public relations.

This is one book on public relations that should be read not only by professionals and students. More importantly, it should be read very carefully by those business persons who wish to gain for themselves and their products lasting public respect.

The book carries the code of ethics of the Public Relations Society of America and ends with a very enlightening glossary of public relations terms.

(The author was the former public relations director of J. Walter Thompson Company (Philippines) Inc. and GUF Group, Inc. International Public Relations, the Philippine societies of IBC & Rotarion and the PR firm of ZIPC)

Why the need to advertise advertising

Without advertising, consumers are left with fewer options finding the best value

AN ADVERTISING campaign for advertising created by BDDP Paris

McCann Indonesia won the top prize—an all copy issue ad with a provocative headline: "Advertising Is A Plain Of Time And Money". Of course, it attracted everyone's attention for its bold statement and people were intrigued to read it.

The body copy of the ad explained: "Advertising is a waste of time and money if people do not want economic growth, because they don't spend money. And always provides, allow businesses to grow and companies to improve their products, do not want the country to move forward and the country's children literary to improve, or build a new generation of smart, discerning people."

Local reasons

On the same year, the ad went on to win a gold award at a major world advertising festival.

In 2005, UPMG United Print Media Group), the umbrella group to which most of the country's newspaper and magazine publications belong, adopted an intensive campaign by DDB Philippines which emphasized the advantages of advertising (see graph). It uses the country's first serious crack at advertising advertising.

The campaign leveraged on print's unique strength by using a close-up shot of a man's shaved head and injured. Print gives a longer-lasting imprint in consumers' minds than what a fleeting 15 or 30 seconder TV or radio commercial can do. Prior to its Ad Campaign launch, the Ad series enjoyed free, classified page two-month limit to all UPMG-member publications.

A further step, UPMG is launching the Philippine Print Awards this year, to raise the creative standards of advertising on print mediums.

The UPP Pagkakaisa ng mga Broadcasters sa Pilipinas) continues to support a radio side—championing the quality of advertising on radio. It encloses the Philippine Radio Awards yearly and has brought the Philippines on a new age. We never had it so good, relocating major accounts in major international clients like never before: Cannes Gold Lion, two Silvers at Clio Shows, Bronzes at Clio and Gold at Asia Ad Fest.

More than giving out awards and patting industry colleagues on the back in every advertising convention, advertising must continue to sell itself to and out of the industry for it provides jobs to tens of thousands (conservative estimate) in the Philippines and in millions of people around the world.

To deliver creative products and services to marketers and their affiliated groups, ad agencies hire copywriters, art directors, account servicing, print and broadcast people, finance and production suppliers in order to create a finished consumption product to sell. The job chain is enormously interconnected.

Advertising informs and educates. Without advertising, consumers are left with fewer options finding the best value for their hard-earned money. Advertising gives people a choice and inspires makers of goods, communities and service-oriented entities to continuously improve the brands they are selling.

From GDP in 1999 the 60Cs of advertising pop up the country's economy. Advertising boosts consumer spending, in the process, stirring up both local and foreign markets to attract foreign exchange.

Advertising promotes and enhances the good in an individual or corporate group. Advertising is a powerful tool to promote social consciousness and responsibility like love for country, environment, preservation of traditions, culture, sense of history, discipline, civic-mindedness, sports, respect for humanity and religion. Can you live in a world without advertising?

'How will your pricing psychology help a public utility business?'

Q: HERE IN THE PUBLIC UTILITY sector and a distributor of electric service in a southern Luzon province. Our pricing is regulated and it has been and will be the object of instantaneous public and media attention as possible power. This is in spite of several years now that we've put forward the presentation of our monthly billing to subscribers almost like Meralco's monthly billing. That means our portion of the total amount due from a subscriber is as little as a trillionor. That is nearly just half of the pricing from electricity generation.

We could your column last Friday telling your readers that taking account of the consumer pricing psychology can help with pricing concerns especially in the consumer side in the office and some of us came out with a clear idea as to how exactly pricing psychology can help us manage better public utilization of our pricing. Please help us understand.

We realize that we've just one public utility business, but your helping us will also benefit a whole lot of electricity consuming subscribers in this province. Think also of the rest of the country's electric services providers and their millions of subscribers.

A: We have to say that you have a whole lot persuasive way of telling us to answer your request for help via our column instead of just a direct email response to you. Yes, we agree that helping your company can help your millions of subscribers is at least understood the big picture of your business as well as a very sensitive aspect of it, namely pricing.

We want our diagnosis by how you present your pricing in your monthly billing to your subscribers. If you say that yours is just like Meralco's, then the billing presentation must share something like the following. (At our own latest monthly customer survey):

Is there anything wrong with this presentation? As far as the-

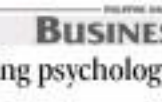
Pricing	% of Total
Generation	40.3
Transmission	10.3
System Loss	7.7
Distribution (you need)	33.4
Subsidies	1.6
Government Taxes	10.1
Universal Charges	0.4
Total	100.0

ory is concerned, there's none. This kind of presentation is clear enough especially as you as an electric power distributor. To most electricity subscribers, it is also just as clear. Those few at least to those who read the entire billing summary included in the individual components of the bill.

But what about to your subscribers' psychology? How will they perceive the bill?

If you think about it, you have to admit that even those diligent readers of your bill, it's the many other types (both the hard data types, instead hearts. And at this point, such subscriber, not all of course, but most of them, cannot avoid asking:

"Why should I pay for ¼ of the cost? that is not the distribution utility's service? Why should I pay for the cost of generation, transmission, system loss, subsidies, government taxes, and universal charges when the one billing



Dr. Ned Roberto
& Andy Roberto

me is just the distributor? Why should I not just pay for the 33.4 percent of the total that's due this distributor who's collecting payment?"

In your particular case, this is what we mean when we talk about the consumer pricing psychology of your presentation as shown in your monthly billing statements. It's a pricing presentation from the marketer's end. It's in effect telling the consumer:

"Look, here's what you are to pay for bringing electricity to your home this past four months. I received electricity generation rates and transmission costs. I also had to pay for system loss, subsidies, government taxes, and universal charges in bringing this electricity to your home. My part of the entire process is 33.4 percent, which is included in the total amount due."

That's how most of your subscribers would read your billing statement. And the larger the total amount due becomes, the more likely it is that the lines of their statement upper quickly connects into a flood.

Now, let's change perspective and talk about the billing from the consumer's end, that is, from your subscriber's perspective. Suppose you have your billing presentation from where your subscribers (consumers) are coming. That's as simple as according to the bill their daily, maybe even hourly, electricity usages. When those usage be-

low for this month's large bill. I also have left the lights in the house on several times when I went out to shop and drive the children to school. And that was the hottest week in the month, so you'd expect lots of sensations (70 bills) and bill the stands and the children."

Can such a simple change and just presentation of the billing statement turn a consumer from an angry belligerent subscriber to a guilt conscious responsible consumer of God? How can such a simple change be so powerful?

That change is a powerful stimulus because it acts on the consumer's psychology of perception and evaluation. What the subscriber reads in the changed billing statement are all the things she did with electricity during the past four weeks. Her evaluation said that it was she and the members of her household who did all those were recorded in the billing. The changed presentation of the very same pricing now triggers a radically different but more positive consumer response and feedback.

Here's the re-statement (with appropriate adjustments to consumer electricity consumption) of the principle of consumer psychology that we quoted and applied in last Friday's Marketing Rx column. As we've mentioned, it's adapted from Robert Gaddis's 1961 book, *Influence, the Psychology of Persuasion*.

"Consumers perceive the price of a continuously consumed service as reasonable when they know or are made to know that the accumulated price comes from their increased consumption. Conversely, they perceive the price as unreasonable when they know the accumulated price does not come from their increased consumption but from the service provider who is unjustifiably passing on its ever increasing cost of doing business."

Can such a simple presentation really work? That is the question we are always asked whenever we dispense with simple prescriptions. We have this consideration to ask of our readers to take. There are other considerations of course but we focus on this one.

We draw from the lessons of compelling precedents. Take, for example, the tetrax. When we get at the end of each month our mobile phone's statement of account, notice how the bill very simply lays down all our outgoing calls and SMSs. When every so often we get shocked at total amount the bill requires us to pay, we quickly shrink value item or items in the list made by the tetrax. It is the reminder that the list in the bill directs us our memory speedily restores our doubts. The shrunk item to a silent exclusion to be more frugal in the next month.

The very same service usage history does the same trick in the case of what we find in the bill from our Mastercard, Mastercard, and Diners. When any of those bills presents to us what purchase or usage behavior on our part account for the bill's bottom figure, our price perception is diverted to say side and we exhibit our use of restraints and those we did the next time as if those bills presents to us what the service provider had to do and what every is had to incur to bring it to its service, our price perception takes a cynical turn. That's understandable because we don't know that behind the scenes for the service provider. As consumers, we only know and trust our own consumer events and decisions.

At Nobel Peace Prize Winner and microfinance maverick, Muhammad Yunus says, "go for the simple solution." That means applied for the simple problem definition. It's problem simplification and solution simplification that marks better and best. Not problem and solution complication.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at blandenglish@gmail.com. *Good Mood*. Check out our blog at www.marketingrx.org. - *The Best of Marketing Rx for Entrepreneurs* is now available at diamond bookstore and Powerbooks.

A tale of two cities ...

From page B1-1

The 80th installment of the Shopwise story focuses on the need for customization, even in serving the mass market. A one-size-fits-all approach is no longer suitable for today's demanding, diversified and increasingly fragmenting markets. Mass communication takes more considerations differences by geographics, demographics and psychographics to customize communications, product assortment and even services to cater to local tastes and preferences.

To illustrate mass customization at work, here are just a few examples taken from the case of Shopwise Antipolo and Shopwise Manila.

Advertising

In generating awareness for its opening, Shopwise Antipolo utilized mostly local advertising and below-the-line tools, such as **lamppost banners, roadside banners, ads in** local publications, sponsorships of local activities, door-to-door flier distribution, **cupcakes on tricycles and triangular banners** on major intersections.

Shopwise Manila, on the other hand, relied more mass media and above-the-line tools, such as print ads, radio announcements and television coverage.

Launch event

Shopwise Antipolo was launched through a mammoth that toured the city center. The mammoth featured a "barker" on a live announcer that informed everyone within the route that the store was now open. There was a concert on wheels, as well as free hands outside the store throughout the day.

Shopwise Manila, on the other hand, was launched through a cocktail-style for select guests and a free shower of the popular

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Mindanao goes after $150B global halal food market

By Ruth Mallare
and Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez
Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—[SIGN WITH FEARS] of escalating religious wars, Christian businessmen in Northern Mindanao said they were hopeful of making good at producing for the market of Muslim food here and abroad.

On Thursday in Cagayan de Oro City, the Federation of Northern Mindanao Grocers' Association met with the Muslim Mindanao Halal Certifying Board, Inc. (MMHCB), a non-governmental organization of the country's leading **muftis or Muslim scholars and food** experts, on the prospects of manufacturing more processed the Islamic food and canned Muslim consumers.

Roger Sanchez, president of the Northern Mindanao Poultry Growers' Association, said his group wanted important economic involved with the MMHCB in the processed meat. "We realize the potential halal market abroad" by complying with the "farm-to-plate" requirements of the Philippine Halal Standards.

Based on international halal trade statistics, the global halal market is now worth $150 billion.

Sanchez said they want a big share of this market and aims to pass the strict international quality standards for halal production.

There are halal halal standards, audited by the MMHCB, supplemented by the national government for the country's halal industry development.

Memorandum of agreement

Among the measures raised by Muslims is the organic sourcing of foods and hiring of qualified Muslims as animal slaughterers for the producers.

Datuk Ismael Ebrahim, MMHCB executive director, said the two groups have agreed on entering into a memorandum of agreement on his group having to provide the manpower for the slaughtering on a mutual basis, and on laboratory sampling for technical examination of the foods that the growers were raising.

The two groups met amid reports on the revival of the dreaded Bagis movement, a militia group organized by some communities of Christians in Central Mindanao to help the then Philippine Constabulary fight the Moro rebellion in the eponymous social region of then President Ferdinand Marcos.

Jamil Climaco, an expert on halal, said Thailand's food industry made good, earning its fair share of some $200 billion from a huge global market demand for halal products.

The Tiaos' nurses, Climaco said, says following the advice of their foreign affairs ministry on "[to what the Dalai] market wants."

Director Ismael Mustapha of the Department of Agriculture in Central Mindanao said the Philippine agriculture was looking at Thailand as a model in entering the gateway for halal export market to the Middle East.

Oliveiro said the cooperation of the government and private sectors in Thailand has brought about that country's procurement of over 1,000 **million worth of laboratory equip**ment for its national halal center to be able to determine the slightest amount of "haram ingredients." Haram means prohibited or unlawful, and is the opposite of halal.

Mindanao's first

The Northern Mindanao Poultry Growers' Association would be the first Mindanao group to receive the halal certification from MMHCB.

Marnavie said they are employing experts and investing on technology so he able to meet the influx of demand from halal consuming countries.

According to Lorie Asuncion from the National Economic and Development Authority in the region, the northern Mindanao poultry growers can produce more than 12 million head of chicken every quarter. This figure is also steadily growing as more poultry growers invest in technology development and research to ensure better production.

However, Sinsera admitted the government support is much needed to group-up the poultry industry that was also affected by the sagging national economy, oil price increases and conflict in Mindanao.

Government support can be in the form of financial assistance for capital outlay, he said.

The meeting was facilitated by the Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco), the Department of Agriculture offices in Northern and Central Mindanao and of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and the Local Governance Support Program in ARMM of the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida).

Capacity building for MMHCB

Asked what Canada's interest might be in Halal matters, Joseph Pallanan, LGSP's program officer, said his group, organized through Cida's long-term peace initiatives in Mindanao, helped build capacity and established institutional linkages for the MMHCB.

The MMHCB assured journalists and the government's direct monitoring of Philippines products as halal (permissible) or fit for consumption was not being peddled for sheer profit. It said livestock raising, slaughtering and meat preparation would have to go through strictly with the processes prescribed under the Halal Standards which had been crafted under Memorandum Order 211 issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

It also made assurances that by "being certified halal products by the MMHCB [the halt food test-food products, like cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, etc.] will mean such products are good for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, because 'halal certification' means international health standards are complied with."

Dr. Nassefe Bair, director of the ARMM agriculture department's livestock bureau, said the office took charge of the task of subjecting the growers' foods to laboratory examination, either in Malaysia or Thailand.

"There is absolutely no problem on sanitation and on handling and packaging [issue] on what we actually saw in the [Tiaos'] slaughtering [processes and facilities]," Hindin, said of the Northern Mindanao livestock growers.

Hindin said the MMHCB has suspended its ruling banned on genetically engineered seeds, said Hindin, science institutes had established finding from a controversial study investigation on the effect of laboratory-enhanced seeds organisms to human consumption.

The merry cooks turn saucy—and more

From page B2-4

slightly adapted to the fast-food market, can now be bought at Mini Stop convenience outlets. It has turned out to be a savory and filling gourmet treat for hungry call center executives whose the 24-hour service stores are hard to locate.

Everything about the expansion has been a challenge, ranging from relocating and expanding the whole commissary three times in a span of 18 years to adding more people, not just to man the kitchen, but to open new accounts, service existing customers, and to supervise sales outlets.

Lately, as a sort of initiation to the world of bigger business, Merry Cooks took on its first food court, to begin the current economic difficulties. Gia is optimistic about the food market's ability to absorb her products and to turn, to Merry Cook's ability to service the fans.

For now, she is busy preparing for the Christmas gift-giving season. The brochures are being distributed and clientele, and orders are starting to trickle in. "Guess, all available spare time will be busy with people filling in orders," Gia says. Wishfully she sighs, "I wish it would always be that way."

Aside from Sharee and its deliveries, Merry Cook also manages and supplies commissary items for mini, ice bulks that and Pedro Collebratus. If there are any houses that can be gleaned from their decade-long experience, these are the basic tenets of doing business: Know who your target market is. Differentiate yourself. Market yourself.

Having been through it all, no one can excite the reasons with more conviction than the Sherry Cooks.

BUSINESS Friday

The merry cooks turn saucy–and more

GANT
TIMEX

MYSTIQUE 37
MYSTIQUE Women's Steel Collection 36 • Multi-Function Women's Chronos • Leathermark Collection

By Chupsie Medina
INQUIRER.net

TAKING ADVANTAGE of Filipinos' growing enthusiasm for Italian food, two sisters decided to expand their stable in the restaurant business by bottling and selling the tomato-based sauces used in their well-appreciated pastas and pizzas. Little did they know how much farther the business would go.

Gaves and Gia Villarica Suarez had founded The Merry Cooks, Inc. in 1997 to support what they envisioned would be a series of restaurants catering to the Filipino's love for Italian cuisine and food in general. "Merry Cooks was intended to be the commissary," or central kitchen, says younger sibling Gia.

The first outlet, a fast-food joint in a mall, did not do well and was closed—all within a year's span. "I guess we were not familiar with the fast-food market," says Gia. It was a combination of mismatches: taste, look and pricing.

On the other hand, the upscale but casual restaurant they opened in Festival Mall in Alabang towards the end of the next year was well received. "People liked Bravo!," according to Gia.

They opened another restaurant in the Makati area a year later, and while it did well in the first couple of years, the fickle and thinning crowds eventually forced the Villarica to close the branch in 2006.

A third Bravo! was opened in Makati in 2004 on ICE delos Cours II, near the Ateneo Professional Schools Building. Here, they found a more appreciative audience among the commercial district's professionals and executives. It was also here that the idea of bottling their tomato-based sauces surfaced.

People would ask if the dip that went with the breads served upon being seated was available and sold separately. The Villaricas obliged. The initial packaging was pretty crude, according to Gia: just computer printouts pasted on bottles. But it sold.

This was a business opportunity that Gia thought about. After some deliberation, the idea of bottling their tomato garlic dip and selling it took wings.

They next took the bottled dip plus a few other tomato-based sauces to Bravo! in time for the Christmas season. Again, people took notice and bought. Merry Cooks now found themselves in the midst of a new business opportunity, not quite what they had mapped out in the original blueprint.

GIA VILLARICA-SUAREZ wanted to bring Cuisine of their restaurant Bravo! to more people by making available the sought-after sauces, dips, breads, pasta, mixes and, recently, even the pizza.

Gia threw her heart and soul into growing the new venture. In the same way as what they offered in the restaurant, all the basic ingredients—whole peeled tomatoes, olive oil, anchovies, capers—that went into their foods were imported. Even the containers had to be brought in from Italy.

Deli in a kiosk

Bravo! Delicatessen's first kiosk was in Makati Supermarket in Alabang, a small stall adjacent to the cash registers. Shoppers would be tempted to taste the bread and dips bobbing in heated ramekins. "It was no turnaround for," says Gia. The income they generated was more than what they had originally forecasted.

The next years became a whirlwind of activities for Merry Cooks. One kiosk after another would open in various malls and supermarkets throughout the metropolis. In each, though, they would insist on their own space, however small it was.

"We wanted to be seen and tasted," Gia says. Each booth would be laden with a colorful array of deli products (named behind a cottage-cross-tasting counter that had three or more products all ready for sampling, being offered by friendly sales personnel.

During the first years of building its niche of deli products, Gia focused on coming up with new bottled sauces and spreads—pepperonata, pulverized, pesto, garlic spreads, roma tomato, salmon mousse, chicken liver, dark chocolate, even artichoke and spinach. "You have to come up with something fresh," says Gia, an exercise that is still religiously repeated every three months.

The sauces and spreads were soon joined by salad dressings and flavored mayos, then a soup and breads. Lastly, even the famed Bravo! pizza had been added to the expanding list.

Out of a box

Margherita (tomato, mozzarella, oregano and parmigiano) and Quattro Formaggi (mozzarella, parmigiano, gorgonzola and cream cheese), two of Bravo! Restaurant Italiano's best selling thin crust pizzas, are now in attractive boxes and at S&R wholesale stores. So are the sauces and dips, but in bigger bottles.

Single-serving shots of pizza,

BDO
Personal Loan
0.88%* is Back!
Apply NOW!
Visit the nearest BDO branch.
We find ways

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Bag buyer beware!

Fakes are increasingly harder to tell apart from the real McCoys

By Cleofe V. Moral

TOTOO BA YAN?

It's often said as a joke, but there it's not. The implications of such chiding when a friend sees another carrying a new "designer" purse are often strained, given women's—and not a few men's—nearly shrewd and unmistakable desire for so-called it bags.

Many would stare, borrow and pause to buy into the handbag phenomenon. Still others shamelessly or unwittingly fall prey to phony items to their pursuit of The Bag.

Fakes are increasingly harder to tell apart from the real McCoys. Owners have become so skilled in making copies that telltale signs escape even the keenest eye at first glance.

On Internet chat rooms, most consumers vouch for the authenticity of items sold in so-called reputable shops, such as the high-end reseller chain in Hong Kong. Others remain leery.

"I bet they sell authentic handbags with an investment of fake bags," one wrote in a forum called The Fashion Spot. Items sold in these outposts reportedly come from socialites who choose to unload barely used or even brand-new handbags to make room for new purchases. Items aren't exactly cheap, but the biggest come-on perhaps is that, often, consumers can find items here than they wouldn't find even in the brands' boutiques—unless perhaps they pay their names on the years-long wait lists.

Luxury brands are skittish when the issue of counterfeiting is raised. China is the mother lode of pirated goods, not least among them handbags. But China is also one, if not the most important market of luxury brands, poised to surpass Japan as the biggest global luxury consumer by 2015.

Conglomerates understandably don't want to offend the same hand that invests in the fake cash bags.

Accusing to authenticity

Interviewed via e-mail, a top fashion house executive said they could guarantee the authenticity of an item that's bought from authorized outlets—the brand's own boutiques. So as not to tip off counterfeit operators, he wouldn't give in detail how a house ascertains the genuineness of an item bought to them for authentication.

Which isn't to say the brands are doing nothing about the problem. They claim to have professionals posted in key cities conducting anti-piracy efforts. In fact, luxury houses still impose the bag-per-customer limit to control reselling overseas.

Early this year, numerous retailers imposed a similar rule, anticipating the possible hoarding of tourists who want to take advantage of the dollar's downturn. But it's still hard to tell to what extent the measures are helping in the global fight against piracy.

The same fashion exec said consumers must be reminded that buying from the fake trade adversely affects not just companies and governments but consumers themselves. Buying fake goods finances criminal networks that include child laborers and sweatshops.

Tell that again to that girl blinded by a logo.

THE FLORENCIO and Lagdameo families (Marissa F. with Don Tony and Doña Henrita Florencio, Marivic F. Brion, Maite K. Bayot, Alex and her mom Linda Florencio Lagdameo

ED ANGELES with Cong. Junior and Dawn Lagdameo, and Ronna Hechanova-Angeles

SUSIE Ortigas with close pal Baby Gin Prieto and Toni Ortigas Duarte

Wife to hubby: 'I gave you the best years of my life'

What we overheard at dinner for two new envoys

BEGA and Marivic Vazquez with Lisa Toledo-Bayot and Bea Vazquez

MARY de Leon, Marivic Vazquez-Prieto and Pusing Hechanova

ED HIJARES

BEGA Garcia and Margie Tambunting

Jaycie's Suzanne Marsha with super fundraiser Mark Go, Bolhein's nieces Marissa and Edru Go

JOHNNY Litton, Sydney Gaullaume, Gigi Montinola and RV Espiritu

EDDIE Yap, with Roman Reyes, Oscar Hilario and Mercedes Benz honcho Pete Ang

SPACE 2000 mainman William Ko with Italian Amb. Rubens Anna Fedele, Fortifolio Managing Director Florence Ko and children Alexis and Billy Ko

WILLIAM Go with rajan George Yang, Charlie Rufino and Federico Lanlo

GEORGE Ching and Albert's Lee

OUTSTANDING businessman Peter Cayetano and good-looking hunk David Lim

HANDSOMEPAIRS included Cebu's business magnate Michel Lhuillier with negra hotsies Maly Concepcion Hechanova, honoree Amb. to Spain Tomas Lagdameo and wife Linda, Cebu's dazzling Amparito Llamas Lhuillier, and another honoree, Amb. to Mexico Paqui Ortigas and wife Susie Bayot

PATRICK Jaimes with mil, Mady Tarrosa, Bulgar I's Mario Katigbak, Marsha Katigbak and Ernan Escaler

CHING Escaler

CHUCHU Rodrigo, from Maribel Francisco and Mandy Edaque

JOEL LAM Bernardo, Grandson and Amb. Albert del Rosario, and Constantina Bernardo

CORY and Henry Almodovar

CAROL Garcia and Charina Enriquez

(Clockwise) CHAMPIONS Bernadette Alabra and Mamie Rogue in golden yellow Jack Nicklaus jackets; Anja Nano with partner Christian Villegas; Dingdong Avanzado-Vic Sotto and Honoree del Rosario

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arvadelo
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using YKL Photo Solutions

But none of the businessmen, it appears, were more interested in the models than the financiers? Ooops! My lips are sealed.

Fundalia gave away fab prizes, such as Fabiana Fiess, Gorgeel and Fontana Arts art pieces.

But sorry guys! No models were included in the giveaways.

Champs day

I'm not exactly a golf enthusiast, palangga, but when one was invited to watch the Tournament of Champions at the lush greens of upscale Orchard Golf and Country Club, how could I refuse a fun-go?

So there we were, with a record field of 156 amateur golfers in a tournament that was looking for the next Philippine representative to the prestigious Jack Nicklaus International Invitational next month at the PGA National Golf Club's Champions Course, in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, us lots, dahlings.

The golf meet is part of the global brand initiatives of Jack Nicklaus apparel, an internationally distributed label specializing in golf and leisure wear.

Each team tried for the chance to savor the country's colors at the 2nd JNII and defend the championship title won last year by Filipinos Jose Ignacio and Omar Dengco.

It was a week-and-week battle between the team of Monty Ragos and Bernardette Abiera and the team of Alan Cruz and Larry Pitanguian. At the 18th hole, a tie was declared, but Ragos and Abiera earned a birdie to finally win by 1 stroke with a net 13 under par 59. Wow! Such an exciting play would be hard to beat.

Apart from the all-expense four-day trip to Florida to compete in the JNII, Ragos and Abiera each won hotel accommodation at 52 Nicks resort, Mercado photos from Globe, and golf accessories. Second placers Cruz and Pitanguian won vacation packages to Boracay courtesy of Irene and Mimosel Suites, palanggas.

But as in any Jack Nicklaus event, everybody wins. The other players got fantastic special prizes. The tournament was presented by the Orchard Golf and Country Club, with Pirtek and Globe Platinum.

Manly spaces

It was definitely raining men (suits, dahlings, when Fundalia, the house of logo'd-to-the-line Italian furniture, unveiled "The Men's Room."

Even if men flocked to the posh glasshouse showroom of Fundalia in Fort Bonifacio, for an evening especially prepared for them.

Fundalia managing director Florence Ko "orchestrated" the male special guests such as Italian Ambassador Raffaele Anna Rubbi, Scholes Kitchen Appliances area manager Ira Aris Pacific, Justin Cheung, business man, Pusing Hechanova, hotelier MV properties, Gigi Montinola, former trade secretary Cesar Purisima, and Golden Arches Development Corp. chair, George Yang, to name a few, dahlings.

The evening had a lot of plans—from the chilled Moet et Chandon champagne to the gorgeous models in sexy Raja Laurel and Randy Ortiz outfits, and a sizzling number from sultry performer, Rimmel Cruz.

Furnishia showcased its luxurious Italian furniture pieces and state-of-the-art kitchen and wardrobe systems.

PHOTOS Pantogrocin Lip Therapy SPF 15, The Body Shop Banana Lip Balm+ and Budget Night-Night Sleep Balm

ORIGINS No Puffery Perfection Eye Area Therapy moisture and Murad Essential-C Eye Cream SPF 15

How to handle 'bubble eyes' and 'popcorn lips'

THE PICKLE WEATHER HAS TAKEN ITS toll on a lot of people's health. Sadly, cough and colds are not considered a good enough reason to take a day off work. And it's not bad enough to take to bed. Here's a bunch of products that helped me look presentable when I had colds. Thank you to friends/managers who sent me these get-well and get-comfort-able presents.

For puffy eyes due to lack of sleep, sculpting fib, salty food and dehydration:

1. Origins No Puffery Cooling Mask for puffy eyes (shown, P1,000)—When applied generously, it can be left on for five to 10 minutes then rinsed off, or applied sparingly to be kept on all day with your favorite eye cream, an ecopost. Its active ingredients include witch hazel, a cold remedy, which helps banish puffiness and lighten dark circles. It also has blanket antidotes extract to calm skin and keep redness from swelling in.

Tip: Use on nose where constant sneezing and blowing can cause rawness and veins to form.

2. Rodel's Eye Alert (P995)—The caffeine in this non-greasy eye cream drains the unwanted toxins and excess fluid that cause the eyes to swell. Apply on top or after No Puffery for maximum eye bags control.

3. Murad Essential C Eye Cream with SPF 15 (shown P1,000)—This is for those who are really serious about anti-aging lines and about repairing pigmentation and damage around the eye area caused by environmental exposure. Caffeine and tiger's herb increase vitality and firmness while toning down the puffiness. Issues eyes are prone to.

4. RV Perricone's Eye Area Therapy (DH) is a two product anti-sleep treatment that contains body combos all cosmetic eye area problems related to aging. The Alpha Lipoic Acid (AF (above P1,000) reduces puffiness, dark circles, and fine lines, while the Vitamin C Intensifier (DF (above P1,000) firms up the skin and reduces lines around the eyes. This routine is simple to be mixed together in small amounts as a little goes a very long way.

Warning: As the treatments are very potent, Dr. Perricone recommended a skin patch test before the use, especially for the AL plus Lipotic field (AF, for those concentrated days before applying to eye area. A slight tingling or warming sensation is normal, but if it is too unbearable it is advisable to skip use of the product altogether.

Lip balm

Moisture lips pertains to badly chapped and flaking areas created by coughing and dehydration which hurt when you smile. Here are my top three sweet mad tasted lip balms.

1. Budget Night-Night Balm for kids (P395)—As main purpose is to help kids sleep better it is applied under the nose or chest like super rub at night, but I find that applying this to my chapped lips dry or night really seals in moisture, smoothes ridges and sloughs off flakes. It also does wonders for dry hands, feet and cuticles. Those a lavender and chamomile extract is to help others relax and sleep easier at night, but it is a bit weak for serious insomniacs.

Warning: Like petroleum jelly it may cause breakouts on the lip area especially for those who are acne-prone.

2. Murad Energizing Pomegranate Lip Therapy SPF 15 (P995)—The most excellent and most-proof of the unknown, as it comes in a tube with a closet-tipped applicator like Lancome's Juicy Tubes. It has salicylic acid to exfoliate dry dead skin on lips. The SPF protects the lips from both UVA and UVB rays so lips are protected from darkening and wrinkling. Although glossy, it does not feel as sticky as most glosses do.

3. The Body Shop Guarana Lip Potter (P130)—It smells like berry bubble gum. Part of its proceeds goes to AIDS awareness. I do it the perfect texture for those who prefer cream rather than grease. Initially it gives a white film on lips when used alone and may be too subtle to be noticed in so turn invisible. Body Shop has other Lip Butter variants in the store like Mahogany, Papaya or Star. It's not moisturizing enough for those who live in very cold places though.

What's new: The Body Shop has re-opened its Glorietta branch at a better location across across Landmark department store. Check out its new well-being line that uses aromatherapy for Deep Sleep, Calming and Energizing.

Murad, MV Perricone and Budget are available at Watsons. Origins is available at Rustan's and Merlin-sand.

E-mail: lifestyle@yahoo.com

METROBANK'S Super Shopping's Free Promo offers a year's worth of shopping. Enrico Villanueva goes for sports equipment.

Credit card offers free shopping promo

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From National Painting Competition to "Your Environment Shapes You"
24 Years of Corporate Sponsorship of the Arts

Even before the Metrobank Foundation started—and eventually became known for—the Search for Outstanding Teachers in 1985, which has now become one of the country's most prestigious and sought after awards for teachers, the Foundation made history of sorts when it embarked on a national painting competition 24 years ago. Back in 1984, the National Painting Competition was touted one of the earliest corporate sponsored arts contests.

Quickly thereafter, the National Painting Competition became one of the 'benchmarks' among arts competitions in the local art community, and winning the award became a pivotal milestone in any young, amateur painter's career. Literally hundreds of entries poured in from all over the country, and names like Bobby Feleo, Elmer Borlongan, Mark Justiniani, Ferdinand Doctolero, Gabby Barredo, Alwin Reamillo, Noel El Farol, and many others who are now established up-and-coming masters, became part of a list that would soon become a directory of the 'best young painters of their generation.'

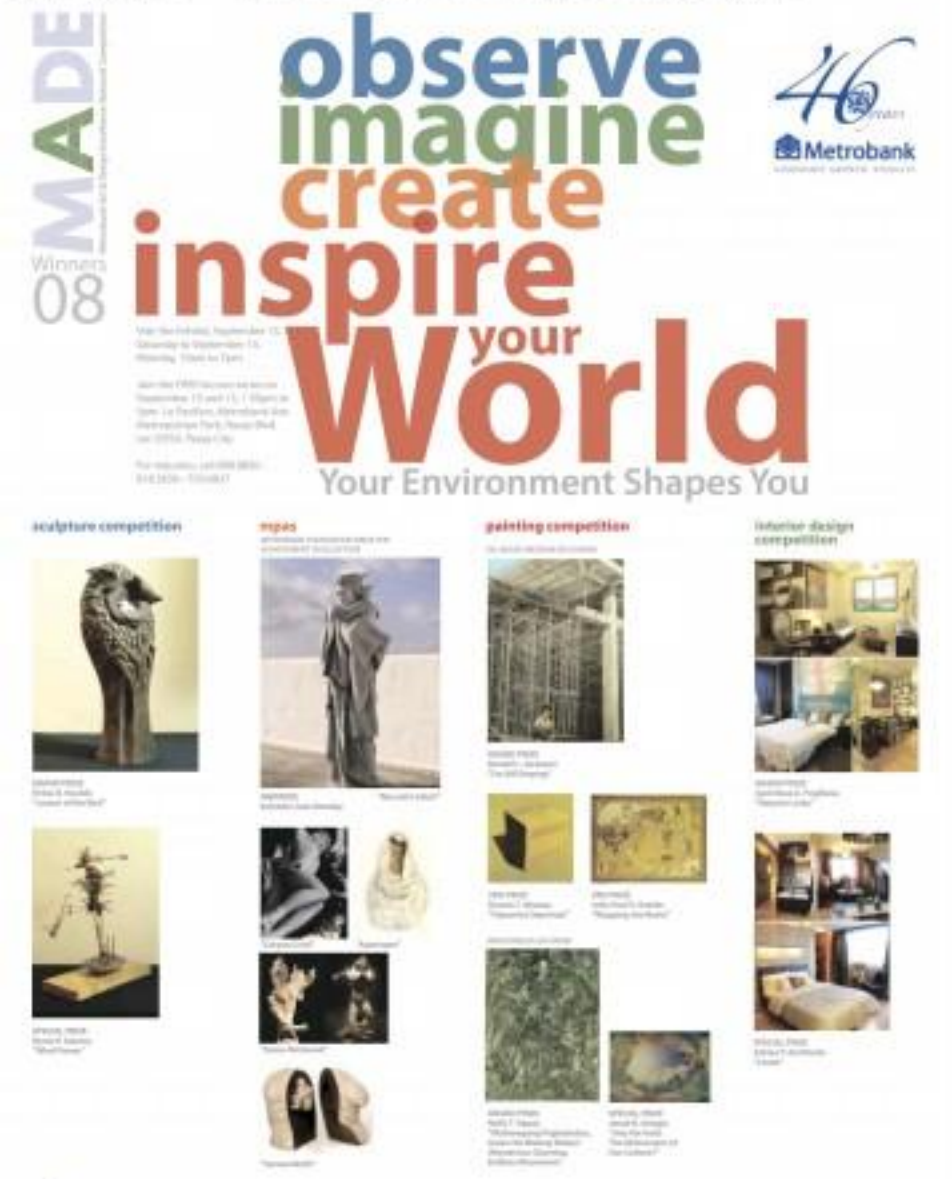
To further boost the impact of the competition and make contributions that are even more tangible to the careers of the finest Filipino visual artists, the Foundation enhanced the program to include a wide array of related interventions. Beginning in 1990, the competition evolved into the Young Painters Annual or YPA, which employed Inspiration, Development, Exposure and Assistance strategies to help visual artists. Under LDEA, winning artists received financial support to launch their first solo exhibit, while private organizations and government agencies received funding assistance to help promote greater art education and appreciation through exposure, skills training and similar activities, especially at the grassroots.

Inspired by the enthusiasm and support by the art community, and realizing the potential of the visual arts to make a much wider impact on stimulating creativity, discipline and hard work among Filipino artists, the Foundation further deepened its commitment to excellence in the visual arts with the launching of the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence (MADE) competitions in 2004. In addition to painting, the Foundation thoroughly expanded its arts program by opening competitions in sculpture, architecture and interior design. Being the first and only organization to organize competitions in these fields at the same time, MADE effectively ushered in a new era in corporate sponsorships of the arts.

In partnership with reputable professional organizations like the United Architects of the Philippines and the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers, the Foundation intended the architecture and interior design competitions in particular to promote the kind of creativity that integrates function and form. The same thought brought forth the idea of a full-blown advocacy program that would help push the concept of a holistic environment through relevant, creative, and sustainable design elements.

Beginning last year, "Your Environment Shapes You" has become the focus of a multi-faceted campaign to integrate art in our everyday lives. While aesthetics remain a primary factor in the assessment of artistic excellence, the use and impact of art as a visual design element of the man-made and natural environment has taken on a greater consideration. As a result, art continues not just to inspire because of its beauty, but as a vivid reminder of our obligation to build a holistic sustainable society.

Through NPC, YPA, MADE and now the advocacy campaign, the Foundation's arts programs in the past 24 years have truly reflected the pursuit of excellence as an institutional vision. In the 1980s and 1990s, Metrobank became synonymous with a well-run, credible, and rewarding painting competition, the launching pad of the careers of many aspiring artists who have since become successful professional painters. As the Foundation moves on in its involvement in the arts, the next few decades promise to be an era of exciting discoveries and interventions that are even more meaningful not just for visual artists, but for the local art community as a whole.



LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
Contributing Editors Apples Abaya-Sudhoven and Jonni Epperson

THE FLUORESCENT pink Steeles, with matching wedge, made of neoprene

LEATHER-TRIMMED 1929 shoulder bag in wood/coated canvas

COLOR-BLOCK "futuristic" shoes with transparent geometric insets

Marc Jacobs goes painterly

His cruise collection is a collaboration with London-based fashion illustrator and designer Tanya Ling

Text and photos by Alex Y. Vergara

LING'S watercolor strokes as reproduced in the resort wear

IN HIS DESIRE TO feed fashionistas' clamor to look chic from day to night after emerging from a long, dark winter, Marc Jacobs, creative director of Louis Vuitton, produced a red carpet-worthy cruise collection consisting mostly of separates for those laid-back evening soirees by the beach or aboard a private yacht.

In a morning presentation at the Clipper Lounge in Hong Kong this week, 18 encore-ists by Brenda Kimball, public relations director for Asia-Pacific, unveiled the brand's 2009 cruise collection of long, flowing dresses, voluminous tops, light cardigans and abbreviated shorts inspired by the '70s.

Kimball also presented several of the season's potential It bags, made either of fluorescent pink or neon orange neoprene embossed with iconic monogram emblems; aptly named Steeles, It's latest series, like its classic counterparts, is accessorized with gold-tone trims and handles.

Ideal for matching sassy contrasting ensembles, including It's semi-beaded black bathing suit and a pair of acid-colored thongs, the Steeles comes in two sizes: an oversized tote and a smaller carryall.

Taking his cue perhaps from the success of Global Shopper's bags several seasons ago, Jacobs dug into LV's archives and remodified a graphic logo dating back to 1929. He dusted it off and in neon-printed stripes in pink or orange on a confident-size shoulder bag made of "futurist" canvas canvas. The same logo, albeit bigger and in black, appears on a larger tote made of the same material.

THE GALLERIA in ruffle

CROPPED top and low-slung beaded shorts go well with GY's latest canvas tote with vintage 1929 logo.

RIBBON detail at the back of the 1929 tote

New versions

For today's bag ladies, Jacobs assembled new versions of the Monogram Galliera in python, ruffle-and the Damier Azur.

Again, as far as It's RTW collection goes, [illegible]

Looking for gladiator fashions

DANIELLE 2-strap gladiators

AS WE REPORTED LAST week, gladiator sandals (updated versions of ancient Roman Crown aka Mycenaean wore to "The Gladiator") are fashion must-haves. Although there are now quite a number of versions on the local market, it's still safe to find your stylish enough and will look good on anyone...not just long-legged models and the like.

FASHION picks

We did some sole-searching and came up with three feminine, fashionable (affordable!) yet sure-can't-go-wrong versions from Japan-based Shoemaker.

Made of leather (for the body) and ruling leather (for the sole), these sandals are up to the minute but not so unforgiving as the knee-length numbers.

Japan Manila boutiques are at the Power Plant Mall and Mall of Asia.

GINGER 2-strap gladiators

Latino Gothic flair

PALE gold multi-chain necklace

SEARCHING FOR THE LATEST "it" bag, show-off shoes or awesome accessory to invest in this coming season? Check out Givenchy's Fall/Winter 2008 offerings at Adrienne Vittadini's.

Givenchy's Riccardo Tisci took his inspiration from Latin America. Female sensuality is celebrated by creating Latin jute de vivre with Tisci's gothic aesthetic.

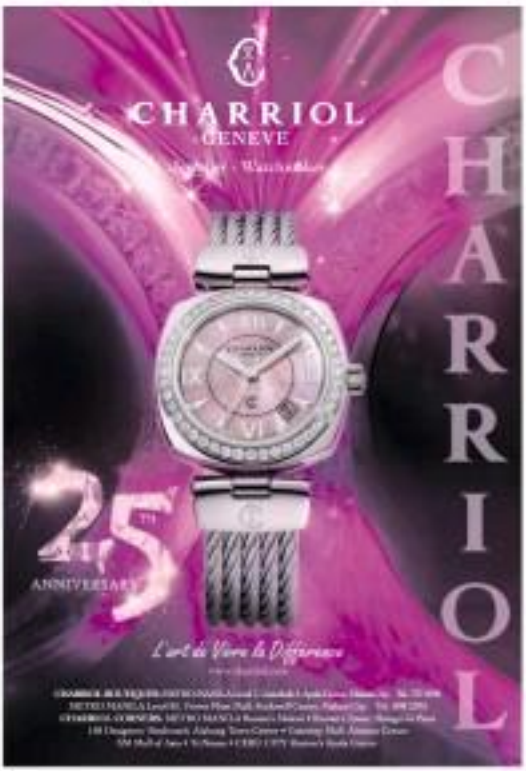
Dressed in a mostly monochromatic color palette, the collection's black and white symbolism

NEW Sacca

the duality of hard and soft, history and modernity, which has come to represent the brand. A key motif of the collection is gold. Slim gold multi-chain and rosary necklaces with crystal and Robbins pearls over images of the Madonna. Adding beauty to the collection are hexagonal crystals, hand-carved, to jet, obsidian, dove and taupe. The season's emblematic bag, Melancholia, in black spectator leather or lace, best reflects the spirit of the collection: confidence with a feminine and romantic touch.

GLADIATOR wedges

MUSE gladiators



CRACKING the opening of SM Department Store Marikina are SM founder and chair Henry Sy Sr. flanked by SM Celebrity endorser Marc Nelson, Marikina City Mayor Ma. Lourdes Fernando, SM SVP-Operations Jojo Mendiola, SM Prime Holdings president Hans T. Sy, SM president Teresita Sy-Coson, and SM celebrity endorser Charlene Gonzales.

SM City Marikina opens

IT ALL STARTED WITH HOPE. So it was fun (being there as it celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, SM should open its first supermall this year in Marikina, the shoe capital of the Philippines.

Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, Metro Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando, SM Prime Holdings president Hans T. Sy and SM Supermarket president Herbert Sy welcomed the first wave of shoppers. The inauguration also sealed the long relationship between SM, founded by Henry Sy Sr. as a shoe store in 1958, and the dynamic city of Marikina.

The mall was blessed by Archbishop Gabriel Reyes. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by the city's top officials – Mayor Fernando, MMDA chair Bernardo, Vice Mayor Marion S. Andres, Rep. Marcelino R. Teodoro (First District), and Rep. Del R. de Guzman (Second District).

SM FOUNDER and chair Henry Sy Sr. with his pioneer tenant Ricky Reyes.

Welcoming the officials was the Sy family led by Henry Sy Sr., Felicidad Sy and SM president Teresita Sy-Coson.

The 125,000-sq m mall is on a 35,000-sq m site along Marcos Highway, Barangay Calumpang. It is SM Prime Holdings' 32nd mall.

The mall is meant to be a growth catalyst for Marikina City by progressive government programs, settlements on waste management, vehicular traffic management, repair of road and bridges, construction of new arterial roads, and rehabilitation of the Marikina River.

At the center of the progress

SM SUPERMARKET president Herbert Sy with French Baker's Juliette Kuk.

MULTICOLORED lighted ceiling fans circle as soon as dawn goodluck.

is the Marikinada Center, which has been declared the city's business, finance and commercial triangle.

SM City Marikina is in the Marikinada Center.

It has the mix of SM malls here such as the SM Appliance Center, Ace Hardware, Surplus Shop, Watsons, and top homegrown and international brands.

It also has local and international fast-food chains and specialty restaurants, right downtown.

For the techies, there's Cyberzone.

It has more than a thousand parking slots, a jeepney terminal, a four-storey wide pedestrian overpass from the LRT Station exit to the mall's entrance.

It is also eco-friendly, where a leisurely walk in and from the riverside is encouraged through an interlinked walkway accessible even to the physically challenged.

SM City Marikina's design team includes Jose Siao Liong and Associates, architects; D.A. Abacia and Associates, project manager, and SP Corp., general contractor.

GOINGS ON

Marra Lanot's new book

"Riding the Full Moon and Other Poems in Filipino & Spanish" by Mia to FL. Lanot will be launched at the 20th Manila International Book Fair Sept. 10, 3-4:30 p.m., at Room 3, 2/F, SMX Convention Center, SM Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City. The book, which is part of the Poetry on Demand Series, is published by Anvil Publishing and Fuji Xerox.

Family weekend fun

On Sept. 13, Bryan's diapers will hold Discovery City, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., at the Glorietta activity center.

A spinning performance will be done by the Yoyo Master as well as brain-tickling experiments by mad scientists from Mad Science. Parents and kids get to be part of the show in a series of games hosted by Allen Mendoza. Game participants can win special gift packs.

Sports tourism conference

The Department of Tourism (DOT), province of Bataan, Nordic and Swimstrong Management Services will hold the National Sports Tourism Conference Oct. 2-3 in Lemap City, Bataan Nuclear.

Prepaid IDD SIM

Sun Cellular launches the Call & Text International SIM. That your loved ones abroad as often as you want for only P1 per load! It comes preloaded with free 5 minutes of IDD-8, and free international texts. For more information, dial 5656000 from your landline or 200 from your Sun mobile phone.

Glad Glam at SM

BRIGHT colored wide wrapped flatties

METALLIC wide-height gladiators with studs

PARTY with glam gladiator flats worn with skinny jeans and an extra top

LOOK like a Roman goddess with a multi-knotted pair of gladiators worn with a toga like dress

DELICATE white flatties with braided rope straps worn with white shorts and ocean blue drapey top

CLUB HOP. Plum and savory yellow patent gladiator sandals are great to party with

SPORTY CHIC. Gladiators worn with a grey hooded mini-dress

Gladiator sandals are available at the Shoe Mezzo Department of all SM stores

Fashion
Available at the SM Department Store

Photography: Erwin Barrera

Gladiator sandals are hot again as a new generation of fashionistas has been spotted wearing this shoe of the moment. Trina Morelia Ramos of DC with her feminine Grecian goddess look, Mimy Cyrus of Hannah Montana fame with her hip boho version, as well as Ashley Tisdale and Vanessa Hudgens of High School Musical with their cool casual styling.

Complicated as they may seem, there's something about the multi-straps and the way it's tied around the ankle or leg that makes gladiator sandals very sexy. And they're making fashion news at SM in bright colors, bold metallics, and chic neutrals. How glam can we get? Here are some fun and hip ways of wearing this it shoes of the season from SM:

Glam Up. Look gorgeously glam by pairing a simple pair of metallic gladiator sandals with a loosely draped halter top and 60s inspired leggings.

The Empire Strikes Back. Look like an ethereal Roman goddess with multi-buckled gladiators paired with toga like dresses.

Club Hip. Take your plum or golden gladiator sandals to the party! Pair them with loose tube mini shorts or fitted graphic tees and skinny pants for a dramatic ensemble.

Boho Chic. Exude boho appeal with a metallic ankle strapped pair with a printed summery skirt.

Sporty Chic. Wrap a pair of studded flats around your well-toned ankle, wear it with a loose fitting hoodie dress for a fit and fashionable look.

Cool Casual. Braided or multi-strapped white gladiators give a fresh look to white shorts or denim skirts and preppy knit cardigans.

BEHIND-THE-SCENE mish-mash: gold-plated harness.

Marc Jacobs goes . . .

From page B1

On designer's fondness for playing with contrasting volumes and silhouettes is evident in the collection. So is his penchant for a bit of bling, as shown in a pair of bra-cling short shorts with narrow, beaded waistband.

Instead of zeroing in on the hips and waists, which is evident in his current fall-winter pieces, Jacobs shifted his focus to new areas of the women's body... the shoulders and the back.

Shirred and pleated sleeveless blouses in nail-polish shades of salmon, powder pink and pale blue are paired with skirts (black or white) slim pants. The collection also has its share of silk pencil skirts and textured cotton sort dresses that evoke elegance on and off the social court.

Bow details and gold plated harness, two other favorite JV accents, are also evident, especially in the black cocktail dress with straps at the back and the billowing halter-neck Fashion jumpsuit with plunging back.

A pale peach goddess dress in Bird' jersey is gracefully draped to emphasize and flutter the shoulders. Its long, flowing hemline is meant to glide on the red carpet, but delicately set on a seashell-strewn sandy beach.

Other iconic details from the label decades, which Jacobs appropriated but deliberately toned down, include a geometric wedge heel in various neutral and flashy shades, and bold color blocks evident in some shoes and skirts.

LIKE the classic Monogram, the Scuba comes with a stamped metal tag and cow-hide trim.

Accomplished collaborator

After his highly publicized collaborations with various creative people, Jacobs has again teamed up with an accomplished artist — Canadian-based fashion illustrator and designer Tanya Ling.

Apart from reproductions of Ling's watercolor illustrations of women as backdrops,

FRANCIS SY

THE GALLIERA, with rose-ring face, in eye-catching python

Expect more dream vacations!

BPI We'll take you further

Looking to take your family to Disneyland? Always wanted to climb Mt. Fuji? Planning to watch musicals with your loved one in Broadway? Traveling to your dream destinations more and have to be as comfy as you imagine. Here are a few tips that will help you get there for real.

Plan to get the best deals

When gas guzzles a lot, a little planning can go a long way to saving you money. Special discounts are offered if you book in advance. Give up some sleep time for added savings. Early morning departures and late evening returns tend to have lower fares. Also, if you can plan to travel during non-peak season to take advantage of the lowest airline prices. If you're traveling abroad and going to many places, you might want to check out local fares at your destination rather than booking them from home.

Keep your eyes open for great deals like using your BPI WorldPerks MasterCard. Use it to pay for your ticket to ANY Northwest Airlines destination and you **get a 50% discount on your second ticket**. To enjoy this, you must book your flights online at www.nwa.com/bpi from now until December 15, 2008. That's an instant treat for you and your travel companion!

A trip may be a charge away

Whether you use your credit card to stop for groceries or the latest fashion, choose a card that will put travel in your sights. Through BPI's partnership with Northwest Airlines, you can easily earn miles when you shop with your BPI WorldPerks MasterCard. Every P45 you spend earns you 1 WorldPerks mile that takes you closer to your dream destination. Miles conversion is automatic and hassle-free, no need to call the bank to convert rewards points to miles, members to KE. Those miles are transferable so you can give the gift of travel to your family and friends. Best of all, your miles don't expire so your dream to travel won't have an expiration date.

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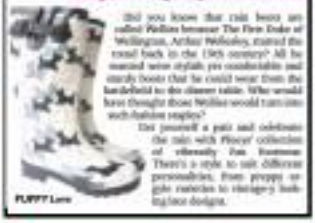


By Agnes Alcaraz Sadhwani

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE THE COMFORT OF YOUR own home or office to have retail therapy. Just go online. With the click of a mouse, you can buy just about anything, from vintage designer pieces to trendy albeit throwaway fashion.

Cyber-shopping can be fun, easy and practical. But whether you're buying from a business or an individual, an online "retailer" or an Internet auction, remember one thing: There are unscrupulous dealers out to deceive consumers out of their money.

Use a secure Internet connection before giving out personal or payment information. Familiarize yourself with privacy and shopping policies that should include details on shipping, refunds, returns and the like.

One downside of cyber-shopping is you can never be certain of an item's fit or quality, so make sure return or exchange policies are clear-cut.

Find the safest way to pay—usually through credit card (although local sites have different methods as well), and print out a copy of the terms, conditions, warranties, item descriptions, and even e-mail confirmations for your records.

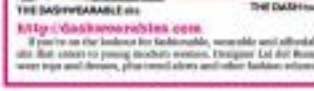
Most importantly, trust your instincts. When in doubt, hold off on your purchase. If you have questions, e-mail or call the seller or the site moderators to clarify matters.

There are countless international sites you can visit for a full-on shopping experience (eBay, Amazon and Bluefly are some of them), but there are also very interesting local websites. Most of these local sites are like specialty boutiques with interesting items not found in retail stores.

Here are local sites you might want to visit for a virtual, visual and thoroughly satisfying shopping experience:

http://dashwearables.com

If you're on the lookout for fashionable, wearable and affordable clothing, check out this website that caters to young modern women. Designer Lei dei Rosario offers a selection of easy-to-wear tops and dresses, plus trend alerts and other fashion-related stories.



Did you know that cute boots are called *Bellies* because The First Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, started the trend back in the 19th century? All he wanted were stylish yet comfortable and sturdy boots that he could wear from the battlefield to the dinner table. Who would have thought those Wellies would turn into such fashion staples?

Get yourself a pair and celebrate the rain with Pinoys' collection of vibrantly fun footwear. There's a style to suit different personalities, from preppy-to-girly cuteness to vintage-y looking luxe designs.

http://streetbeatboutique.multiply.com and

http://shopwanderlust.multiply.com

Known for her funky and eclectic sense of style, top model and one of Manila's best dressed Tyderic Gelua Ilanza has brought her fashion know-how a notch higher by offering ultra-trendy pieces in two websites. Streetbeatboutique carries clothing while shopwanderlust offers accessories, all personally chosen by Tyderic. Take your pick from a good selection of up-to-the-minute, reasonably priced items.

http://dashwearables.com

If you're on the lookout for fashionable, wearable and affordable clothing, check out this website that caters to young modern women. Designer Lei dei Rosario offers a selection of easy-to-wear tops and dresses, plus trend alerts and other fashion-related stories.

http://fortyticouture.multiply.com

Searching for those perfect gladiator sandals or strappy glove boots? This is the site for you. Monica Pig Chaucerous is a collection of stylish footwear made of genuine leather in functional, fun and quirky designs.

Featured in Jennyperson.com and available in Atelier Debbie Co on Aguirre Street Makati, and at the Window store at Shaklah Bolanos at the A/V of the Podium, the shoes are packaged in the brand's signature "fun color box" and come with its own shoe bag.

Trendspotting: Socks and sandals combo and Shanghai sunglasses

THE XHADOW trend will surely save your pedicure money and time. Black socks worn with sandals and peep-toe boots are hot, hotter, hottest right now.

Not only do they give the sidekick to an outfit, but also give your ensemble a much needed boost. Wear it with a dress for an edgy look, or with a pair of black trousers to evoke elegance.

Sunglasses

Set your eyes on a fresh take this season and go the Oriental way. The first global Chinese Lifestyle brand, Shanghai Tang, unveils an exciting eyewear collection.

Boasting the soul of authentic Chinese art, the collection evokes elegance through intricate details and Chinese characters that bear lucky symbols, giving each wearer a distinct sense of good fortune and prosperity.

Shanghai Tang aims to make a mark on the cosmopolitan woman, with distilled art, that can only come from a rich Chinese heritage. The brand has broken grounds for "Chinese Haute Couture," and with a pair on your peepers, you carry an ounce power of Chinese culture.

Email the author at jfabi@inquirer.com.ph

model citizens model citizens model citizens model citizens model citizens model citizens model citizens

In living color

Chuck non-colors for vibrant pieces

DURING REHEARSALS FOR Randy Ortiz's "Rapino" gala show, some of Manila's top models came dressed in a burst of bright colors, a prevailing trend among the fashionable set. While some opted to mix their neons with dressed-down denims, others chose to match theirs with neutrals, specifically blacks.

Start checking these non-colors to form of vibrantly hued pieces. Take your cue from these stylish fab. AM

TIP: Tone down and modernize vibrant pieces by matching them with neutral-colored items. This bit pink shirtdress, for instance, is made edgier with the use of black stockings with stirrups, trendy gladiators and an oversized tote.

TIP: Guys can wear colors, too! Go for stripes and use non-colors like black and white to create balance.

TIP: When wearing bright solid-colored dresses, create contrasts with the use of multi-hued, mixed or printed accessories—in this case, a zebra print purse.

TIP: A neon-colored shirt (worn inside a tiny jacket) or a colorful pendant or bangle, or all you need to add a touch of color to a potentially dull getup.

STRUCTURED volume, glitter and shine, optical art characterize Rajo's 45-piece collection.

The new maximalist

Rajo Laurel presents maximalist ideas with minimum effort

HIGHNOTE

A PATCHWORK of Philippine weaves

FIERCE, FLAMBOYANT, FANTASTIC Rajo Laurel never did anything halfway. To celebrate his 15 years in fashion, the tri-dressed designer and Project Runway judge staged the gala, "Rajo Red," at the Red Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La, for the benefit of the Philippine National Red Cross.

Swathed in black, accented with red blooms and dominated by an unconventional square-cage-with-organic-coral-like-backdrops and two gigantic LCD screens, the venue became a glamorous enclave filled with Manila's glitterati.

The show opened with a video of the designer speaking briefly about his work. Emotions roiled, he said, as he looked for his answer for inspiration. Ultimately though, it was his passion for the craft that drove him to celebrate and share his success by presenting a 45-piece eclectic, thematic (Inés, Africa, spiritual art and even H&M!) and thoroughly luxurious collection made of the finest fabrics—some of which were richly embellished. The designer reportedly spent almost P1 million on one ensemble alone. Plus he incorporated into his designs the antique obi collection he's been collecting since he was 15.

Finally, a timbered voice, the sound of bells and chimes, and the spotlight on a gorgeous Jasmine Meriwether in a red embroidered body suit with a structured ruffle skirt. Textured dresses and tops in ivory and black that were characterized by volume followed this.

Hard and soft

The juxtaposition of hard and soft elements was evident in some of the pieces. Ruffles were structured and draped. And airy, voluminous pieces—some with feathers—were contrasted with sleek hemlines or slim sweaters.

Rajo presented quite a number of strapless coats, capes and capelets that screamed drama and gowns that were rich and elegant whimsical ones. The pieces glittered and shone, seemingly forming a wall of magical sundials.

Rajo's "favorite" piece made of vintage Philippine weaves, compassionated with bold bone bangles by Arnel Ongo, and worn by a stunning Ann Canas was a showstopper. The reworked obis combined with illusion tulle and structured and used bits to wow also standouts.

His "truest dresses"—inspired by the Tom Dixon chair in his office, and characterized by geometric cutouts in tulle and silk jersey...were much applauded, as well.

Director Bobbit Carmona did an excellent job in translating Rajo's vision onstage—from the stage design (modern and unconventional), choice of music (a mixture of standards and the latest tunes), and lighting (from bright to spot to full-on drama). The show was full of flair and drama, which are really missing in most runways shows nowadays. Most of the models moved with grace and elegance, giving due justice to the designer's creations. The replica—long hourglass like lashes, dewy skin and sculptured hair—was impeccable.

Rajo ended himself by presenting maximalist ideas with minimum effort, coupled with classics that stood the test of time. His maturity and confidence as a designer were evident. So let his imagination run wild with new concepts while keeping his feet on the ground through his staple of romantic, luxurious, wearable pieces.

In earnest call, Rajo's staff (trainees, patternmakers, beaders and the like) took center stage with the designer to take a bow and receive much-deserved accolade. Now that's humane. Bibsbeta Pierce.

E-mail the author at pbeta@inquirer.com.ph

THE INSECT dress

RAJO enjoys the standing ovation with his staff.

REWORKED antique obi

SPIDER gown

JASMINE in a red bodysuit and tulle skirt

And they came dressed in Rajo...

EZA Calzado

AMANDA Griffin-Jacobs

LIZA Ilarde

DIVINE Lee

ZSA Zsa Padilla

RUFFA Gutierrez

TERESA Herrera

MANDY Santos

VENUS Lazo-Morrison

Marc Jacobs goes painterly

REPRODUCTION of Ling's watercolor

From page D1

the presentation also highlighted a number of white silk twill pieces that acted as requisite canvases for painterly reinterpretations of the artist's watercolor stripes in such shades as pink, blue and yellow.

The pieces to which they were printed on were equally noteworthy: an asymmetrically draped cap and skirt with bow details, bracelet-sleeved jacket and a pair of shorts. Reproductions of Ling's artworks were also evident on two white sundges with floral print-either in fuchsia or turquoise.

Designed primarily as a bridge between fall-winter and spring-summer, the entire collection is a fairly recent development in the realm of luxury fashion.

That there's a growing demand for such pieces seems from January to March, a rather short period even in the fickle world of fashion, should no longer come as a surprise. Season after season, top fashion houses in try to outdo each other to gain fashionistas' attention. As far as D' is concerned, this year is proving to be no different.

RIBBONS and bugs glean on this LBD

PRINCE boots

THE SALUERA Bow

BOLD

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Gardang PINAY

Manic Mondays

Khristine B. Gabriel

How it seems like every time you wake up on a Monday, you realize that your weekend is over and chaos will start in a few hours? Panic then sets in. You haven't got much time to do anything else but to have a quick shower, a less-than-satisfied meal, and a dash for school before the school bell rings.

But Mondays shouldn't always be stressful. That's why I'm giving you a few tips to spruce even the weekend to ensure that the first day of the week wouldn't be music as that we notice. Take these suggestions to heart and you will look lovely the whole day!

1. Head to the salon and get a trim or perhaps a brand-new style and color during the weekend. If you can't splurge now, when can you?
2. Give yourself a manicure and pedicure. You might even want to treat yourself to a brand-new shade of nail polish.
3. Pick out your outfit and accessories. Don't wait until the morning to put everything together. This is just asking for trouble.
4. Practice your make-up routine. See if you can try a new set of your liner. Let me share my quick make-up tips. Here you go.

a. Get an assistance over your face. Massage and spread evenly over your face. Let the moisturizer be absorbed by the skin for a minute or two. In most cases, it is recommended that you wait for ten minutes before applying powder, but three would be more since we simply don't have the time.

b. Dust on face powder and blush. Powder would give you a matte finished look and is so easy to blend. Powder is often used because of its soft and natural look effect.

c. Apply your favorite shade of eyeshadow. Light coverage is all you need. Careline Twenty Eyeshadow Set gives you various shades of eyeshadow that are create playful, charming and fabulous looks for every lovers.

d. For eyebrush. Powder blushes are the easiest to apply, and Careline Twenty Blush can let down the stick well. With its ultra-soft powder blush, it adds a natural burst of color to your cheeks.

e. Glaze your lips. Choose lipgloss that has lightly colored tint to give you the luster of soft and healthy lips.

f. Find your signature scent. Here's a little twist. Combine 2 scent to get your very own fragrance. But don't self-anyone what you did. It can be your little secret. Careline Twenty Cologne offers you different fruity fresh scents like coconut kiss.

Love this article or want to share your thoughts? Please email me at khr_gabriel@yahoo.com

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

Contributing Editor: Bia Francisco-Prieto

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AIG Credit Cards congratulates Cardholders for winning in the inTENcities weekly raffle draws.

1st Weekly Draw
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2 Ms. Bernadette B. Lim
3 Ms. Remedios V. Soriano
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5 Mr. Jose M. Obediente
6 Ms. Cynthia O. Valdes
7 Mr. Mark Vincent I. Cruz
8 Mr. Jose B. Bernarte
9 Mr. Michael C. Wassmer
10 Ms. Ana Regina B. Go

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Prize: Nike Oregon Digital Watch

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2 Ms. Jasmin E. Vita
3 Ms. Rhodora Marie H. Durante
4 Mr. Jesus C. Arienza
5 Mr. Nelson P. Zafico
6 Mr. Ronald S. Solomon
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GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

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TULDOK — BY PARIA COLL

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ERVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABALINAS

MEKROKOSMOS — BY JONAS TEJIDO

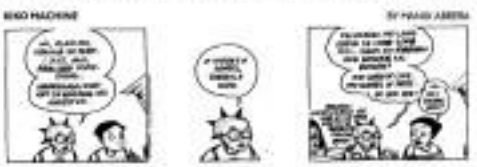
SALAWAH — BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LIRA GARCIA LANO

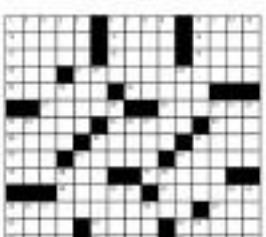
LOVESHOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

BIKO MACHINE — BY MANO JARERA



MEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Allan E. Parrish
9/11/09

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

ACROSS
1 Oil liquor
6 Inherent trait
10 Staff sign
14 Last task grp.
15 Greatly enlarge
16 Dark, tempestuous
17 Perry and Wilson
18 ___ Stradivari
19 "___ ready do it"
20 Gen. Ed.'s
21 Family's oldest friend
23 Chatting sound
27 Often-sent letter mark
28 Newspaperman
33 Weird Spanish city
34 ___ Alamo
36 Obvious truisms
38 Darkest month
39 Electric weights, briefly
41 Violent flame candidate
42 Kind of
43 Took an umpire
44 Have memories
46 Asked to act
accusation
47 Lobster
48 Musical piece
51 Mercury, e.g.
52 Gen. MD
54 It's flowers
(Be Who)
55 Curtain's partner
61 Lyricist's
abbreviation
63 Heave or Dole
64 Cube changer
65 Work walkway
66 Ancient Asian
68 Amaryllis exh.
69 Stock opening
(see above)

DOWN
1 Steps
2 Watch in vain
3 Gen. MD
4 Tech's dad
5 Parts of cars
6 Quadruped's
comfort
7 Breeds
8 Texas weaver
9 Nordic shoes
10 Piggy's
playground
11 Rent-a-baby
12 Water-based
13 "Candide"
Quixano' kiss
14 City in central
Israel
15 Fresh with
milk
21 Donated
24 Church staff
25 Bee SSE
26 Afford of by
the means
29 Low-calorie
30 Dismiss
magistrate's
31 Sad Chad
32 Sweet notion
37 Fleeting points
40 Declaration in
Nagoa
41 Deer towns
43 Cheese
cloth
45 Lawyer's no
consultation
47 Speaker's
stand
49 Rammed tribute
50 Dolly's kitten
53 Gondola
57 Football great
Marino
58 Ancient Sumeri
city
59 Word defining
Erie, Erie, and
Erie
60 Bowler in
62 Erotic
64 Mr. Bumpy's
buddy

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

TYSON BONE TRINE The New Right rebels and moral dissidents, active in television, radio, and the Internet, have been a very serious force in politics. They have language and words, and your affairs should work where you can be private at work done. Although you're a creative, this environment is beneficial to your communications. Quite likely, a major change will take place next year.

BIRTHDAY of George Chando, boxer; Michael Tolkin, writer; Jennifer Rubin, entrepreneur.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19). Your future looks good, but you might think of cashing in your chips. Don't do this. This is a temporary setback. Don't be fooled.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20). Complying with your co-workers will pay off in the long run. You'll be able to have fun with people you all guard today. You or an important someone can influence a small business decision in your favor.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20). Your home life will be a little hectic this week. Unexpected visitors will happen. Do get out of bed and get out.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22). This is an excellent time for you. Therefore, slow down. Take it easy. Be with others and avoidance of responsibilities that you say you do. Slowly does it.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22). Thoughts of an old flame will surface for you. Your social circle is expanding. You're full of bright new ideas, and you're excited and enthusiastic. Don't be afraid to change your own way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22). You might be frustrated with a partner today, or you may have unexpected expenses. Be careful with your money. Don't be reckless with your cash. Be sure to keep your receipts.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22). You feel motivated to improve your services. Unexpected news related to legal matters could turn you off guard. People are very touchy today. Be sensitive to this person.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21). You could suddenly change your perspective quite a bit today. Although you have to admit that whatever occurs to you has been building in the back of your mind for some time. You need to do something very different.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21). You have a very warm, loving relationship with friends, teachers and co-workers. Health issues to do. You feel independent. Nonetheless, whatever happens seems to function this time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19). You want to get some things done, but you're in the mood and a change of scenery. Socialize with friends and relatives are particularly encouraging.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18). Progressive moves should channel your energies. Your ideas of values and likes today. You problem is that perspective won't be very helpful. People are stuck in their ways.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20). You're in a very romantic mood. Especially dealing with partners and those friends. Many things could happen to you today. It certainly is safe to say that the more cautious you are today.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

			5		3		1	
2		9						
				1			2	
5								6
		6		4		9		
7								1
	3			6				
						7		5
	8		7		9			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	1	2	4	9	3	5	6	8
9	6	8	5	2	1	3	4	7
4	3	5	6	8	7	9	1	2
1	4	9	7	5	2	6	8	3
6	2	8	1	3	6	4	7	9
5	7	3	8	4	9	2	3	1
2	8	1	3	6	5	7	9	4
3	5	7	9	1	4	8	2	6
4	9	6	2	7	8	1	5	3

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Iza Calzado and other beauties do it right

Viewpage 81

AUDREY ZUBERI
Healthy shiny hair is always in. Try: Cera Shine hair serum

DAWN ZULUETA-LAGDAMEO
If you go for colorful eyeshadow, everything else should be subdued. Try: Forever 21 eyeshadow palette

BEA LUCERO-LHUILLIER
Make sure the color of your face is the same as everything else. Try: Estee Lauder loose powder

VENICE LAURel
Stick to earth shades to bring out your natural glow. Try: Bobbi Brown makeup palette

EMI JORGE
Soft waves give an overall look of a feminine look. Try: L'Oreal hairspray

SAM LAUREL
Beauty is all about balance. A bright dress with a fresh face is the way to go.

Try: Shiseido's loose powder

Shopping is always thrilling at Festival Supermall, so come visit today!

September 1 - 30 • 2nd Level Carousel Court
We Will Rock You to the 10th Power!
Shop and be one of 10 lucky customers to enjoy every P1,000 purchase you make. You can win a mobile/ new Hawaiian Wild Sea plane by calling Tel. 09 1963 Smart No. 42 - 2884, Globe at 5888

September 13 • 2nd Level Carousel Court
Great Grocery Grab Raffle Draw!
Find out if you're one of the lucky 10 as we draw the Great Grocery Grab winners!

Jazz Up Your Ride!
Groove to the tune of revving cars and enhanced engines as WRock 92.3 gives you a car show and competition like no other!

Barazoy Blast Off!
Come fly with Asian Spirit as they reward Barazoy tickets to the 10 lucky winners of the July Raffle Promo!

September 14 • 2nd Level Carousel Court
Grandparents' Double Celebration!
Let our grandparents enjoy their shopping experience as we reward them double the raffle chances on this special day!

September 14 - 30 • 2nd Level Carousel Court
Gadgets for Grabs!
Power on and get connected as our techno tenants showcase the latest jaw-dropping gadgets in the market!

There's never dull moment in
FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
FILINVEST - ALABANG
Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang

Watsons

3-DAY SALE
September 12, 13 & 14

10% OFF on your minimum P1000 single receipt purchase.

Enjoy up to 50% OFF on selected personal care and wellness products.

THE OFFICE MAN.

MAN ABOUT TOWN

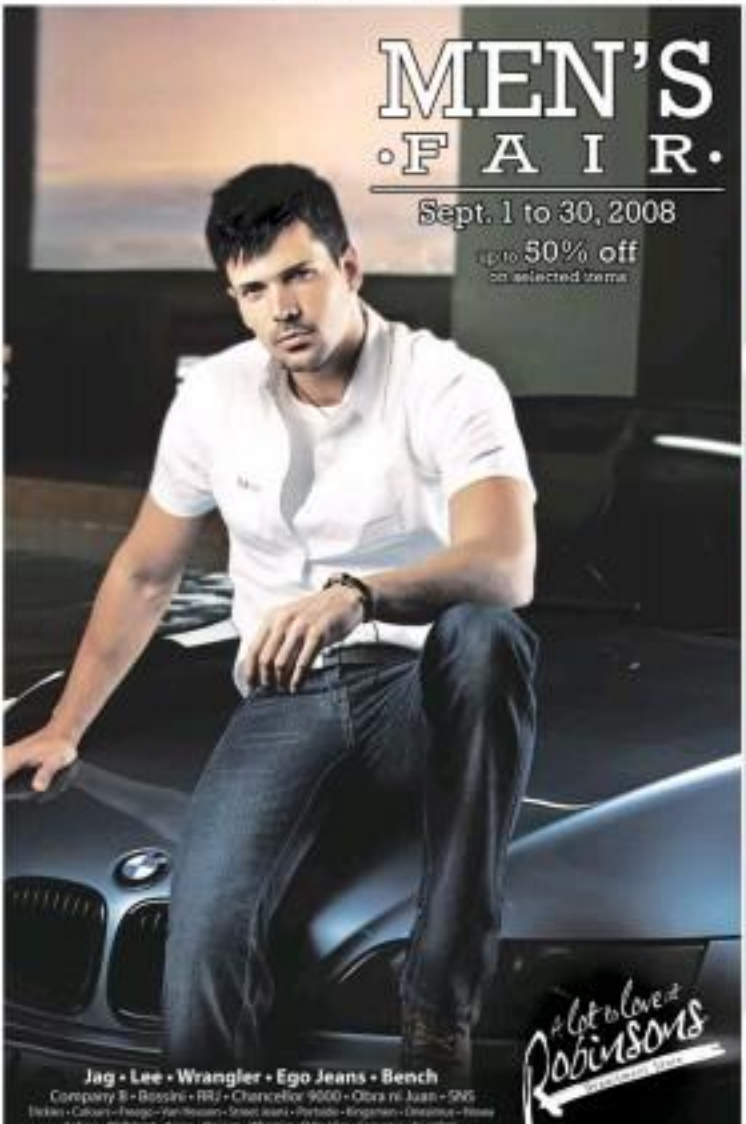
Before, men detached themselves and were indifferent when it comes to shopping. But not anymore! The fashion landscape has seen how they have become more interested about making their own style statements.

That is why this whole month of September, ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE (RDS) takes on a 'manly' viewpoint and serves up a "MEN'S FAIR" to honor stylish and trendsetting men.

THE ACTIVE GUY.

Men's sartorial tastes have indeed evolved. The once preppy college student now wants his rocker attitude highlighted; the dynamic urban professional who needs a polished look daily can now roll up his sleeves and chill. Mr. Celebrity is not ashamed to be seen all sweaty with his workout routines; the corporate big wig, with his clean sophisticated sense of style, goes home and becomes a handy-dad. These are proof that definitely, today's 'man about town' has become more than just your average Joe. He is more sensitive and flexible.

This emerging breed of men with style and enough substance will surely love Robinsons Department Store's extensive range of men's brands from formal and semi-formal outfits to manly accessories perfect for formal and casual occasions.



THE WEEKEND WARRIOR.

THE EXTRA STYLE-SAVVY.

Whether you consider yourself the modern James Dean, a chic geek, stylish athlete inspired or a corporate head honcho (uh hello-ello), you are sure to strike it rich at Robinsons Department Store's 'Men's Fair'.

Plus—a free gift awaits each customer for every P1,000 single receipt purchase.

Robinsons Department Store's Men's Fair—sponsored by Jag, Lee, Wrangler, Ego Jeans, Bench and co-sponsored by Company 9, Bossini, RRJ, Chancellor 9000, Obra ni Juan and SNS — is happening simultaneously from Sept. 1 to 30, 2008 in all Robinsons Department Store branches nationwide. For more details, log in to www.robinsonsdepartment.com.

Model: Eric Fagundes (Ideal People)
Photography: Rossini Gomez
Styling and Concept: Ralph Saadon
Grooming: Archie Tolentino
Location: Panda Makati

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Forever young, but moving forward

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

CINDERELLA, THE SPECIALTY store for young fashion, is making a resurgence.

Marielle Coconad Santos-Po Salonga is the third generation of Cinderella owners who are dynamic, smart, classy and, more important, idealistic and enthusiastic.

In the store's merchandising manager for the ladies' private labels, she identifies what is fashionable among budget-conscious teens and young women. With her team, she helps to make glamour a way of life by pricing clothes between P500 to less than P2,000.

She doesn't have the CDO (child of owner) airs. On the contrary, the urban is modest about her work. "I'm lucky now to the company. One thing that has affected me in a good way is working here, finally, after seeing how it has grown, starting with my grandparents," says Santos-Po, who is pushing 28.

Rhinelda Coconad and Florencia Coconad established Cinderella Dresses Inc. in 1946. It started by producing children's wear, until it developed into export manufacturing. Eventually, the couple set up Cinderella specialty department store and, through the years, expanded to outlets and offshoots.

Santos-Po enjoyed immersing herself in the store and was always fascinated by the glamorous merchandise. Her mother, Thelma Coconad, the company's executive vice president, was always on buying trips while her father, Hayden Santos Lees chairman of the Sisao Conversion and Development Authority), would help in sales in the business side.

Her brother, Richard, now manages the imported brands, while her sister, Michelle, was handling NuWaz, until she decided to focus on her family life.

Their mother is admired in the retail industry for her sharp instincts and business savvy, for knowing what Filipinos want to buy. Santos-Po says her parents trained on getting her grounded, with a business course at the University of Asia and the Pacific. Then she pursued her dream by taking up a master's degree at the Institute Marangoni in Milan, majoring in fashion brand management.

She admires the Italians' fierce loyalty to their home-grown products, their discriminating tastes, and their uncompromising standards in production. She also wants to encourage a similar faithful allegiance to Philippine-made garments and accessories.

Best model

Santos-Po, who is in charge of beefing up Seventeen, the teen brand, and C Woman for young adults, is the best model for her brands. Today she is dressed in a trendy color-blocked dress, with a flattering tapered neckline dress with a satin bubble skirt, and shod in metallic ballerina flats—all from Seventeen, naturally. As an accessory, her jaunty Fiazzi-printed bag affixes the beige-and-azalea color scheme.

"I love fashion. People think it's all pretty," she says. She attributes the healthy prospect of her labels to teamwork and cohesiveness, involving a lot of group discussions with the target readers, the hard-nosed middle class consumers, who wants high style at a modest price.

"Our strategy is to focus on items that are most attainable. We are minimizing expensive ones," she says. Cinderella dresses typically sell for P800, while a pair of separates can be had for less than P1,000.

M&M's F Carousel Santos-Po

Targeting the hard-nosed middle class consumer, Cinderella's Marielle Santos-Po aims for high style at a modest price

Judgment and timing also play crucial roles. Last year, Cinderella came up with jackets in July, in time for the traditional rainy season. However, customers didn't feel the need to get a jacket because the weather was unusually dry. When the collection left the racks, the rains came in September.

This year, Santos-Po rescheduled the production of the jackets, but the rainy season set in earlier than expected. She realized that in fashion, the weather forecast is important in determining production and delivery. However, the unusual patterns could throw retailers off course. "We've learned to react to them (things quickly)," she says.

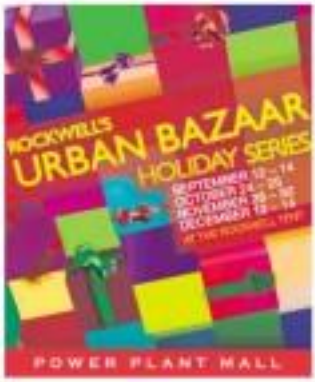
Strong products

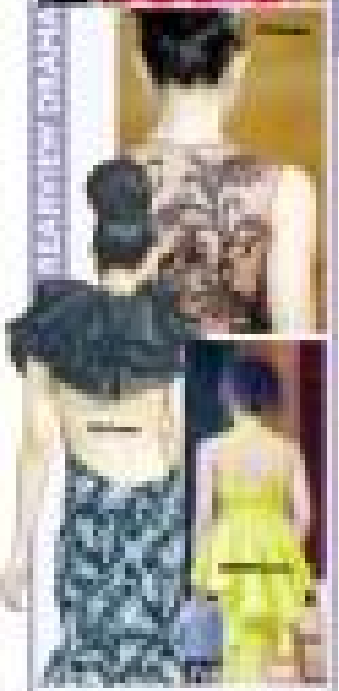
Seventeen's strongest products are the cotton/lycra T-shirts, the printed tops and denims. The statement T-shirts such as the quirky "I Love Attention," "No Romance Without Finance," while green living concepts such as "Go Green" and "Recycle" have been the best sellers. Santos-Po says that, fortunately, the trend in today's fashion doesn't require much washing or detailing, hence lower production costs.

The collection features bold-striped hoie cardigans, striped shirts with puffed sleeves, corset-inspired tops that go with the current layered look, camisoles, knitted tanks with trims and cable dresses.

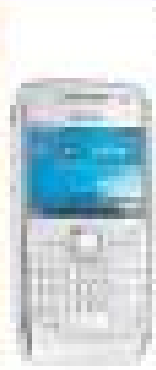
Kids love the versatile solid-colored cotton tops and striped mini-polo shirts.

FOREVER 21





LIGHT AND DARK

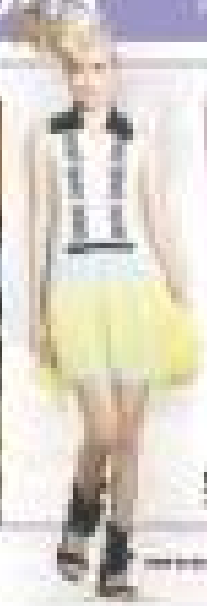


NOKIA PRESENTS FASHION WATCH QUARTET

Mobile fashions

Stunning cellular phones and head-turning designs rule the catwalk in the most anticipated affair of the season

SHORT STORIES



SATIN, BEADS AND LACE

JEWEL COLORS

Forever young, but moving forward

From page F1

reminiscent of the '60s preppy look, which they wear to school. Versatile sleeveless, wool-rich dresses to suit any lee wears with jeans for day-time. Just match it with an elegant bag, and you can go out for a dinner. The psychedelics also swap up the printed canvas sneakers at P1,000.

C Women is geared for women who are starting their careers. Dresses are the top sellers, not only because they are the rage, but also because of their affordability.

Jumper dresses are adorned with floral appliqué. A shapely retro satin dress could go with classic pearls. A geometric-printed dress features an attached scarf that adds a touch of formality. A woven appliqué top, combined with an A-line corduroy dress, is appropriate for the unexpected hot days. For the wet season, the most expensive jacket, in corduroy, fetches less than P1,800.

Jantzen Pe and her team have just finished the holiday collection, which will be on the racks in October. The look will be feminine-imbued with florals and vintage prints, and lots of chiffon for softness. The colors are dramatic—red, purples, emerald, embellished by red and gray Oxford shoes and bags add shine to the major treasures.

"The collection looks like you've gone through your grandmother's closet," she says.

Everything that comes on the racks is based on thorough research and quality control.

Fitting

"We cling to the key. The clothes have to fit our body type, which is different from Hong Kong and China, where women are skinnier. Filipinas tend to be flat, but have more mass in the bottom," says Santos-De. She is also particular about getting exact shade of fabric and with the printer finishes of the sewing.

The top 5 picks from the current crop would include:

* The empire cocktail dress with an electric pleated skirt from C Women

* Skinny jeans and colored denims from Seventeen. "Even if you're chubby, it can slim you down."

* Tunic tops from Seventeen ("Wear it alone as a dress or with jeans.")

* Tailored jackets from C Women

* Wide-length sweaters from C women

"These are the trends that work best for this season. You'll find the same styles in the imported brands, but are prices are more affordable," she says.

Aside from the private labels, Jantzen PE is also working on organizing activities leading to Cinderella's fifth anniversary celebration in October.

"I feel I'm able to contribute and to give back. I wouldn't have enjoyed the blessings while growing up and learning about clothes and retail if it were not for the family," she says.

COUGAR dress shirt and khaki pants

Man about town

ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT Store (RDS) holds a Men's Fair until Sept. 30.

The fair features formal and semi-formal outfits and accessories for formal and casual occasions. Also showcased are striped and checkered polos, khaki pants and sweatpants and tops for the active set. For out-of-town trips, there are men's cargos, vintage denims, shorts, colored tees, shoes and sneakers. The office men will take pleasure in long sleeved polo shirts and dress slits, eye-catching ties and classic leather shoes.

For the extra style-savvy, there are slogan shirts, dress shoes, crisp blazers, trousers, sweaters, sunglasses and sun-jackets to choose from. Plus a free gift certificate each customer for every P1,500 single receipt purchase.

Behaviour Department Store's Men's Fair is sponsored by Jag, Lee, Wrangler, Ego Jeans, Bench and co-sponsored by Company B, Kenkel, 681, Chesed Fine Wines, Libra at Jean and Elite.

RSJ POLO, shirt and denim jeans

CHANCELLOR 9000 suit

BOSSINI polo shirt and shorts from Robinsons

WRANGLER polo and dark denim jeans

Great Arctic Adventure for Citi clients

Your deposit could be your ticket to see the Northern Lights or join an Antarctic Dream's cruise

Citi is opening doors for clients to go on an unforgettable travel adventure in its latest campaign. Dubbed the 'Great Arctic Trio' promotion, Citibank Philippines and Citibank Savings depositors have the chance to win a trip for two to the Arctic region while enjoying access to world class banking products and services.

To join, simply open an account with at least P2 million from August 1 to October 31, 2008 and earn four raffle chances. Every P500,000 additional booking will entitles customers to another raffle coupon. Clients may choose to open a savings or checking account, a time deposit or invest in a special deposit account or other investment products through Citibank affiliates during the promotion period.

Existing clients are also eligible to join by bringing in fresh funds of at least P500,000, which will earn them one raffle coupon.

Two winners will be drawn from Citibank, while one winner will be picked from Citibank Savings. Each wins two roundtrip tickets with two accommodations to the Arctic Circle. An array of Arctic tours can be selected such as:

(1) Tour the Antarctic via the Antarctic Dream Cruise to see its interesting wildlife including Polar bears, Arctic Foxes, reindeers, pink-footed geese, breeding ivory gulls, and seal-mates; or

(2) Visit Norway to experience the marvelous Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights, the frightening natural colored light displays visible at night in the North sky.

For more information, log on to www.citibank.com.ph or you may also visit the Citibank Philippines or Citibank Savings branch nearest you.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bennie G. Velarde

DID YOU KNOW...

Guy Ritchie film tops UK charts

LONDON—FILM DIRECTOR GUY RITCHIE HAS GRABBED THE top spot of the British box office this week with his film gangster flick "Rocknrolla," known internationally as "The Real Deal." The movie took 1.6 million pounds in its first three days. Staying strong after nine weeks on the chart was the ABBA-themed musical "Mamma Mia!" in number two. "The Duchess," an 18th-century costume drama starring Keira Knightley was a new entry at number three. Reuters

My sexy boyfriend

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Benny Kenshido

KARYLLE: "I miss Boyog. 'Wow, aminin mo!'"

HER BOYFRIEND, ACTOR Dingdong Dantes, was recently named one of the sexiest men in the world. If she had her way, singer-actress Karylle would keep their relationship private, but that's like asking for the moon at this time.

TAKE FIVE

In this interview with Inquirer Entertainment in her San Juan home, Karylle, 27, was evidently more reserved when answering questions about "Boyog" than about her crush. Boyog previously told Inquirer Entertainment that before you both got very busy, you had a lot of "bonding time."

Ito, tatanong ko sa 'yo ulit. There's little time for that now. We just go jogging or nature tripping. Last week, we went to Tagaytay for the hiking, nag-ATB kami sa Batangas.

Those trips were just with Boyog, no driver, no alalay?

Kami lang kasi ang kaya sa oras n'ya sa pagdi-drive. Gusto ko kasi siya ako ang nagda-drive. With my schedule for "Mel Tiki Story" [the telemovie with Jessica Arnyll as Mel's] is an ongoing pre-shooting [I can't really go anywhere.

How long have you been together?

We've been together for three years. He met Jessica, where we both studied. That's a lot of talents at the time, but I noticed! Thinking of getting into a relationship. With the previous ones, I felt na masyado akong nagmamadali. I wasn't even sure if Dong was courting me [at first]. And

BY MARINEL CRUZ

Joyous music on a stormy night

By Nicholo Concepcion

DESPITE HEAVY TRAFFIC AND flash floods caused by a thunderstorm, some 6,000 people made it to the George Benson-Al Jarreau concert Monday night at the Araneta Coliseum.

The tandem, first hatched from a 2006 collaborative album, "Givin' It Up," is on the last few dates of its Asian tour.

REVIEW

Jarreau, now 68, walked with a slight limp but has lost none of his famed vast singing talent. He continued to amaze, demonstrating the use of the voice as a dynamic musical instrument. His solo spots early in the show were pure joy—peppered with vocal augmentations of the guitar, bass, percussion and horn, his body twitching to the rhythm.

In a bossa nova medley that included snippets of "Recitation," "Agua de Beber," "Man Que Nada" and "Girl from Ipanema," Jarreau sang with a high-strung fluidity that matched the band's upbeat playing, even as he paused on certain moments to acknowledge the crowd's response.

It was easy to understand why Jarreau—a Psychology degree-holder who first worked as a rehabilitation counselor

PHOTOS: GG

DID YOU KNOW...

Emmys live on Studio 23

STUDIO 23 WILL air the 60th Annual Emmy Awards live via satellite from the Nokia Theater in downtown LA on Sept. 22, 9 a.m.

Fifteen shows currently airing on the network received a total of 49 nominations, including ABC's "Lost" (Outstanding Drama Series) and CBS' "Two and a Half Men" (Outstanding Comedy Series).

Jon Bergeron, Heidi Klum, Howie Mandel, Jeff Probst and Ryan Seacrest are this year's hosts.

An exclusive trip to Australia is at stake for viewers who can identify 12 out of 49 Emmy nominees tracked by Studio 23's Emmys decoy. Answers should be e-mailed with the participant's name, age, address and contact numbers to studio23@inquirer.com.ph.

Joyous music on a stormy night

From page A1

The two jazz legends gave the crowd enough reason to get up and dance

while moonlighting as a club singer in the 1960s—heard his voice wafting in outside. "It broke your heart," he said, as Benson joined him onstage.

Grammy winner

Before doing two songs from "Givin' It Up," Jarreau bothered the audience as the album's significance, skipping the fact that it won two Grammys, but emphasizing its all-star lineup of genre moderator Hubby Flavorish, Marcus Miller, Larry Williams, Joe Farnon, Patrice Rushen, Stanley Clarke, Chris Botti, Jill Scott, Vikash Colombia, and a surprise appearance by Paul McCartney.

In "Long Comer Tune," Jarreau carried on an inspired mood, having added lyrics to the original Marcus Miller track (from Miles Davis' 1986 album "Tutu"), while Benson ran through some nifty footwork on his own signature model Ibanez guitar. Where the latter (also known for his scatting aside from his distinctive singing voice) jammed on vocals, a wonderful explosion of jazz skills ensued.

Scats & Grabs' "Summer Breeze" had a cool makeover, Jarreau's rendition combining the folk-rock tempo feats on R&B grooves, and Benson belting it in real guitar solos.

Treasure trove

"It'll be back," Jarreau announced, calling to let Benson take over in the point, the sound' began on there lasted on Benson plug into his treasure trove of hits. (The gig opened with "Breezin'," his jazz instrumental classic which Jarreau also updated with lyrics.)

Looking sprightly at 65, Benson started wooing the crowd with his dazzling "Love Is Love," hips mobilizing like a marbu dancer. He did this repeatedly in "Let Me Love You (One More Time)" and "How Your Love Around"—upbeat romantic tunes that had earned him a mainstream following.

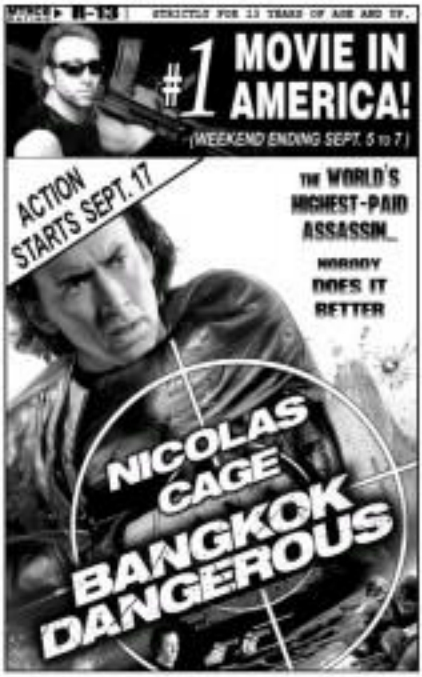
A succession of ballads ("Nothing's Gonna Change My Love For You," "In Your Eyes," "Greatest Love of All") fetched more applause, the last one a reminder of how Benson's version had preceded Whitney Houston's.

People in the front rows let go, rising to dance as Benson, citing his 1980 chart-topper, "Give Me the Night," Where Jarreau rejoined him to duet to "Givin' It Up," the Big Dome bounced with total energy.

The audience seemed totally satisfied—in local parlance, "busog na busog"—because the band, aside from having drummer Mark Himmerman, bassist Stanley Ross, guitarist Michael O'Neill and backup singers Debbie Davis, completed three keyboardists. One of them, musical director Farnon, also played a mean saxophone. The other two, Darrell Garfield and Wilson Sosa, completed the lineup of stellar names which should be familiar to jazz enthusiasts.

Blurred lines

Whatever lines separated jazz from R&B and pop were blurred in several numbers throughout the show. On the last song, Benson's jaunty cover of the 1963 Drifters single "On Broadway," even the lines of frontman leader Fernando Zobel de Ayala and newscaster Karen Davila couldn't resist dancing.



My sexy . . .

From page 01

there, we just walked our block each other—no...

What do you love most about him?

I mean him, "Mwa anime mo!" *Hehehe* ...ya. He even asked me, "Iloma lang siendo ko ne hehehey ako!" (Smooth, Aug. 24). I said, "Ha, para maghare ng lugar ang ilang mga hehehey sa mundo."

Is there anything you don't like about him, a pet peeve?

Mayroon! I have it when he makes noise by tapping his hands on the table. I'm also him his cards. On the other hand, he doesn't like my facial tolerance about some things, like where to eat.

We imagine there are girls who'd throw themselves at Dong. Don't you feel just a bit insecure sometimes?

Of course not. There's one time when he picked me up from rehearsals and all the smoking girls in the building stopped sun to see him. One of them, hindi ngayo nakatin, screamed, "Ang gwapo pooga mo!" That was really funny. They usually just giggle.

Do you watch "Operation" where Dong goes to bed lips with Marian Rivera?

No. He tells me when it's steep to watch.

Is he also sensitive?

He does ... little things ... like wanting for me when I dove down while jogging. He wakes for me too.

What's the best present you ever got from Dong?

He puts ourselves in giving your presents. That year, he bent me. Now with a Manila Bay cruise on my birthday then from his last trip to the US, he gave me a "Best Girlfriend" award, and a Tiffany bracelet with an Eiffel Tower and NY not charms.

What was your first impression of Dong?

Very cocky, but he's actually very sweet.

What interests do you share with him?

A love for old movies. He likes old and cool.

Your biggest fight ever?

Didn't need answering that one.

A creditable but flawed achievement

SO SHARON CUNETA'S "PRINCESS" daughter, KC Concepcion's decision to also become an entertainer has received diverse like hats, who hope that she can at least match her mother's many achievements.

The good news is that the young star acts up a storm in her debut film movie, "For the First Time." She plays a young woman who has made mistakes in the past and now has a hard time regaining the affection of her powerful dad—heavy emotional baggage that drives the actress's expressive acting, heights and depths, with the help of director Joyce Bernal.

After a while, however, the zigzag mood swings that KC's character is subjected to, no thanks to the movie's jagged plotting, strains some of the edge and bite that generally distinguish her performance.

Ironically, the ups and sags are to "fault" of KC's character, but are imposed on her by her new boyfriend (Rabbani Gutierrez) and her cold, gruff, unreachable father (Phillip Salvador).

Richard's character is initially challenged by KC's disdain for him, then genuinely falls for her, then drops out clear to astonishment mean, then perhaps again and gets her in trouble with her dad, etc.

Pitfalls such (a), KC has to sing in montages, and the back-and-forth serves is ultimately overbearing and wearying.

As for her dad, his cold-and-even cruel treatment of her (call it "tough love") is unlikely to

Nestor U. Torre

wearing because it's such a one-note act, even after his belated epiphany of latitude remorse.

Sidekicks

Other distractions: the local movie cognoscenti's usually "side-kicks," and Richard's numerous on-set friends, who are in awkward mode on actual a "reunion" with him toward film's end.

To his credit, the usually engaging lad, Richard attempts an edgier, more mature character, as a looney bourgeois of "love" who breaks hearts the world over.

After he gets his emotional comeuppance and falls for KC, however, Richard appears to be stumped by the consequently more complex acting demands on his now conflicted character.

The film as a whole is a creditable but flawed achievement.

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 RIGHTEOUS KILL	2 HELLBOY 2	3 BABYLON A.D.	4 FOR THE FIRST TIME
GLORIETTA 4	1 BABYLON A.D.	2 FOR THE FIRST TIME	3 RIGHTEOUS KILL	
	4 DEATH RACE	5 BIG STAR	6 HELLBOY 2	7 GRANDMASTERS
GREENBELT 1	1 RIGHTEOUS KILL	2 HELLBOY 2		
GREENBELT 3	1 RIGHTEOUS KILL	2 HELLBOY 2		
	3 WALL-E	4 FOR THE FIRST TIME	5 BABYLON A.D.	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 HELLBOY 2	2 RIGHTEOUS KILL		
	3 BABYLON A.D.	4 DEATH RACE	5 FOR THE FIRST TIME	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HELLBOY 2	2 RIGHTEOUS KILL	3 FOR THE FIRST TIME	4 BABYLON A.D.
MARKET! MARKET!	1 HELLBOY 2	2 BABYLON A.D.		
	3 GRANDMASTERS	4 RIGHTEOUS KILL	5 FOR THE FIRST TIME	
TRINOMA	1 FOR THE FIRST TIME	2 DEATH RACE	3 RIGHTEOUS KILL	4 BABYLON A.D.
	5 GRANDMASTERS	6 BIG STAR	7 HELLBOY 2	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — MITSUBISHI CAR EXHIBIT
September 7-12, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt — SHOPPING SPREE AT GREENBELT 1
Win exciting prizes and a P50,000 SHOP for every P500 worth of purchases at any Greenbelt 1 establishment
August 15-October 15

Alabang Town Center — A Limited Engagement: Maribel Dowe Designer Labels
Enjoy up to 80% savings from the participating SM Brands
September 19 - 21, Commerce Mall & Circle de las Palmas

Ayala Center Cebu — GEN 15 - Multi-media Live Show at the Ayala Malls
September 8-9, 1:30pm,3:30pm &6:00pm, Activity Center

Market! Market! — CLUBBERCISE
September 12-14, Activity Center

Christian Life — Repertory Philippines presents Disney's MULAN Jr.
August 8 to December 14, 2008
For details, call 810-7111 or log on to www.repertoryphilippines.com

Ayala Museum — In commemoration with artist Benito Victorio on 4 Days at Museum Lobby
For details, call Beatriz at 757-7117 loc 21 local 30 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma — PHILIPPINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION JOB FAIR
September 12-14, Activity Center

GALERIA QUATTROCENTO ART WORKSHOP
September 12, 13 & 20, 1pm onwards
2nd Level Exhibit Area (near Plan de Dios)

Glorietta · Greenbelt · Alabang Town Center · Ayala Center Cebu · Market! Market! · Tri Noma

Anita Linda triumphs in Toronto

TORONTO, ONTARIO — Even before the audience at the AMC Cinemas could see the first scene of her film "Adela" in its second screening last Sunday evening, Anita Linda was applauded enthusiastically when she was introduced by Raymond Phathourinopoulos, international programmer of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Overcome by emotion as the crowd's reception brought her, Anita, at 83, attending her first international film festival, put her hands on her mouth.

It was a very touching moment for the veteran actress. Last Saturday, Anita, barefoot in her room at the Courtyard Marriott in downtown Toronto, admitted that when Gina Bartita made a splash in the film festival circuit with Jeffrey Jeturian's "Rekados" she thought that was her chance of having the same honor someday. "That was in the back of my mind," she said.

Dream-like role

By the most auspicious coincidence, we ended up not only staying in the same hotel where Anita, her director Adolfo Alix Jr. and producer Aileen Carvas were booked, but their rooms were almost right across from each other.

Anita also told us that she wondered when she would have a title role in a film again, is something so significant to her first return in 1952, "Ifas," which she and Adolfo made Anita's own within a reality — the lead role in "Adela" and attendance at her first ever international film festival in her remarkable 66 years-plus career.

Anita missed the first screening of "Adela" last Friday as an official selection in TIFF's Contemporary World Cinema section but we learn that audience reaction was just as favorable as to the second one we attended a few days later event, before the film began, Anita told the audience, "I hope you like the movie and you'll remember me." The crowd sure did, marveling at the veteran actress' ability to convey a wide range of emotions without the benefit of words in many scenes in "Adela," as she portrayed a mother and grandmother reminiscing a lonely 30th birthday.

They cheered when Raymond asked Anita, Adolfo and Aileen to come back in front for the director Q&A with the audience.

The audience gasped in amazement when Adolfo said that "Adela" was shot in just seven days and on a budget of about $25,000 (not even a tiny fraction of a Hollywood star's salary). "We didn't have enough money," Anita declared to appreciative laughter.

Aileen's shoot being directed by the young Adolfo, Anita answered, "I'm reminded me from overseeing. Sometimes, when I cried too hard, Adolfo said, 'No, no, no.'

"I love you!" an audience member yelled. "I love you too!" Anita gamely answered back.

Gracious and tearful

When Anita came out of the theater, she was surrounded by the filmgoers. "Congratulations on such an exceptional performance!" a Canadian exclaimed to her. A Filipino told her that he has been a fan since her "love teams days with Jose Padilla Jr."

Rodjil visited her to sign their "Adela" screening tickets and excitedly posed with her for pictures. Amid all this attention, Anita was gracious and tearful as the outpouring of admiration for her performance.

"Time to live!" she raised about as we rode in a cab on Toronto's expressways on route back to the Courtyard Marriott. "Narurugpo ba ako?"

At the hotel bar, over a round of drinks, Anita said that when she heard the word "horror" as adrenaline rush kicked in and she was able to do all her walking and physical activities required of her in the movie, including taking steps down a precariously thin, ice-slowly looking piece of wood from a movie boat.

With Maria Lisa

Aileen expressed how she and Adolfo were impressed with Anita's professionalism and how she came prepared, all her lines memorized, on the set of their first collaboration, "Inin-Indasa."

When we asked Anita, who turns 84 in November, if there is still a dream role that she hopes to play Adolfo should love to reveal it. It's a topic that she and the director have obviously all discussed. "Lola Pepeng," she obliged: "Success to strong superstitions — tomboy, feat and no-no, ang dream role kong ito play an alcoholic, pero yung may issues kung bakit naging alcoholic siya."

She mentioned Maria Lisa as a contemporary in answer to our question. We all got thrilled talking about how exciting it would be if both she and Maria Lisa starred in a film. Adolfo said that Gemma Mendoza is already planning such a movie with the two great actresses. Dance, make it happen!

On that note, we said good nights as Anita, after reserved last room, third. The group had trekked to see the Maguda Rufo reality in the day) her feeling loved and fulfilled.

"Kawawang ito lang sa Pilipinas," sense Lav Diaz via e-mail upon his return from Italy where his "Melancholia" won the prize for Best Feature Film in the Orizzonti, a sidebar to the just concluded Venice Film Festival. "Hustisya ka na, #ala akong maaasahan na evil gimmick or so-so. Isang Arthouse, at hindi mainstream na festival ang nagbigay sa akin ng pinakamalaking award."

He continued: "Sa ang sinabi ko sa pagtanggap ng award: 'Dito is for my family, for my people, for my country, for Philippine cinema.' And so we continue the struggle ... the struggle to bring stories to greater heights! Thank you, Venice!"

The long-haired filmmaker is a bold iconoclast with his epic-length films clocking more than eight hours, in this age where a movie with a running time exceeding two hours is considered long. He volunteered this quote from the Orizzonti jury members, as quoted by Chantal Akerman and Jose Luis Guerin: "We are watching 'Melancholia' for eight hours, it didn't take us two minutes to decide. We just looked at each other and said, 'This is the best film!' No deliberation. It was unanimous."

Positive reviews

Back in Toronto, we didn't get to meet Harsh Mendoza, whose controversial "Swibe" is entered in TIFF's Vanguard program, due to our conflicting festival schedules. But the good news is, Jason and his film, invited by some critics on the Cronicle and Blog, have entered dialogs initiated and did not see a critical backlash because.

The trailblazing director sent us a text message on his way to the airport for his departure from Toronto. He wrote, "The response at the TIFF was more positive than in Cannes, but only because of the full attendance at our two public screenings but also because of the positive reviews we got from Variety, Hollywood Reporter, Screen International and even Ain Blog, 'The Napoles Report,'" on http://blogs.inquirer.net/napolesreport.

'Mad Men' cooks up compelling campaigns

The 2nd Avenue series has 16 Emmy nods this year, including one for Outstanding Drama

By Oliver M. Palomboy II
Contributor

A CELEBRATED 1960s show on American advertising agency in the early 1960s, the TV series "Mad Men," is a unique but clearly James on the past that exposes the conflicts beneath the glamour.

Like any "serious" series that relies heavily on gritty portrayals of relationships, "Mad Men" signifies and accentuates adult interactions with its dysfunctional roles and dealings. The first season is currently airing on cable channel 2nd Avenue.

Created by former "Sopranos" writer/producer Matthew Weiner, the show's appeal partly lies in its look: meticulous art direction. Every stitch, sleek sets, relations and props create that near-perfect, life-sized elements, exhibited by a bunch of visually ambitious and unhappy characters. "Mad Men" currently has 16 Emmy nominations, including one for Outstanding Drama.

Big decisions

In the New York-based Sterling Cooper Advertising Agency, most big decisions are made by a select group of white men. These ad men (or "mad men," as some affectionately call themselves) create campaigns that resonate with target markets and help shape history and culture (at least within the confines of this fictional society). The women hold subordinate positions and are occasional recipients of some sexual remarks; they are also willing participants in secretive office romances.

We see this side of the ad industry initially through the eyes of newbie secretary Peggy Olson (Elisabeth Moss). Naive and shy, Peggy experiences the hectic, demanding nature of the business, especially since her boss is creative director Don Draper (Jon Hamm). Don seems her professionally; strong junior account manager Pete Campbell (Vincent Kartheiser) does just the opposite. He represents an obstacle in Peggy early on, and the mutual animosities results in some tense and a few funny interactions.

Don is a heartbreaking family man, a brilliant luminary respected by colleagues. But he's stressed, and secretly sleeps with frustration.

Almost every married man on the show cheats on his spouse. Sleepy office manager Joan Holloway (Christina Hendricks) romances senior partner Roger Sterling. Lane Slatery, a married guy hobbling chain-smoking and boozing sex commences on conference at Sterling Cooper, but the employment ends always as-and-smoking — specifically juggling business and pleasure, as they all get good work done. Predictably, while the ad men casually conceive of great selling ideas and connect with their customers, their own lives are constantly challenged.

"Mad Men" turns this entire into compelling viewing.

LAV Diaz shows off the Orizzonti Prize for his film "Melancholia."

GERMAN actors Ursula Werner and Hans Wurgbol in "Cloud 9."

Butterflies and goose bumps, liver spots and all

BERLIN — THESE BUTTERFLIES and goose bumps can take anyone at any age by surprise in the simple message of the startling new German film "Cloud 9," an explicit look at a love triangle among seniors.

The run, liver spots-and-all depiction of elderly lovers in the first blush of infatuation has thrilled German critics and charmed Berlin's coverage in the country's culture pages.

What is sensational about the film is that it features an up-of-the-century sex between a stranger, twelve grandmother and the 76-year-old object of her affection, as well as between the woman and her husband of 30 years.

The novelty of such scenes comes at the right time in a country coming to terms with an aging population that refuses to be written by retirement.

The story itself, as told by hot Rasi German director Andreas Dresen, is so simple it could take place in nearly any time, in nearly any culture.

"Who would want to screw a couple of chubby, wrinkly seniors having sex? Quite simply: anyone who finally wants to experience a realistic, passionate and moving love story," the mass-market tabloid newspaper wrote in a glowing review.

"Dresen and his actors go at it so uncompromisingly and bewitchingly that it is a joy for any real movie fan."

"Wolke 9" (Cloud 9), named after lyrics in a John Lennon song, presents raw, evidence who roam a lot of room only as a sometimes.

When the charming Karl tries on a pair of trousers she has just altered, it is only a matter of minutes before the two are rolling around like teenagers on the rug, in his living room.

Tragic consequence

Ingo later goes home, still flustered by the sudden passion that came over him, to find his kindly husband of three decades, Werner, waiting patiently for him.

A loving wife, Inge frames Werner's hobby of listening to recordings of antique trains and cheerfully accompanies him on placid outings on the local commuter rail.

There are life is still active, too, and the camera captures Inge tenderly courting Werner's frail ribcage for taken a bath and the couple's enthusiastic lovemaking in a creaky old bed.

But Inge finds herself unable to resist Karl's advances and eventually ignores her adult daughter's advice by telling Werner about her affair.

"Should I just better pump the last 20 years of my life?" Inge moans in the anguished scene.

Her confession has tragic consequences for all involved, in an ending that drew a startling exodus and tears at the film's finale premiere, just as it did when it captured a minor prize at the Cannes film festival in May.

"Cloud 9" owes a debt to real-blatant nods at the 1970s cult classic "Harold and Maude" and the 2003 indie hit "The Station" starring Sabine Azeau. Read our Daniel Craig in a Mary-Gwendolyn Kennedy will: a much older woman).

Dresen also had his team search Helen Clarissa's "Existence" for its unflinching look at unimpeded bodies coupling.

The filmmaker, whose kitchen-sink dramas have also garnered income with Britain's Ken Loach and Mike Leigh, said his aim had been to take a fresh look at aging. Agence Ernest-Prose

LIVING Stars

Website: www.inquirer.net/livingstars

Edna Emerse G. Velarde

Fashion-challenged

NEW YORK — FOR AMERICAN SOCIETY HEIRS rattling in cartoons with mother Susan Somerset when it comes to style. "She is very, very, very disinterested in fashion," Annarti said Tuesday night at the presentation of Max Azria's spring collection in New York Fashion Week. "She wears her gym clothes until night. Sometimes she puts a jacket over it if I beg her to." Annarti, 23, is Somerset's daughter with Italian filmmaker Franco Amurri. AP

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OGIE ALCASID

FELLOW SENIOR JOSH LEDERMAN LED ME to the book "From Success to Significance" by Lloyd Reeb. Its subtitle says it all: "When the Pursuit of Happiness Isn't Enough." When you achieve a certain measure of success in your career, you often find yourself asking: "What happens next?" One answer is to give back to your community. This book assures people that when you give back, you don't have to give up your passion. Giving back enhances your passion ex ego. It contains a lot of Christian values that are excellent by

Raynard San Diego Jr.
Inquirer Central Luzon Bureau

Al Al DE LAS ALAS

THE AQUARIUM FILLED WITH GOLDFISH IS A GIFT from [adoptive mom and aunt] Ninang Anna [de las Alas]. She says it will bring me good luck if I put it in front of the house, by the entrance. Bong shot dear. She also has an aquarium in the house I built for her. She keeps an arowana there. One house help is assigned to feed the fish daily and clean the aquarium every so often. My job is to check if the aquarium needs cleaning already.

Raynard San Diego Jr.
Inquirer Central Luzon Bureau

TAIL TALES

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MAMMA MIA – PG13	HELLBOY 2: THE GOLDEN ARMY – PG13	RIGHTEOUS KILL – R13
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NOW SHOWING

60 celebs lead US cancer telethon

LOS ANGELES — Cancer research advocates and more than 60 celebrities ranging from Jennifer Aniston to the US presidential candidates made history last week with a live telethon that aired simultaneously on America's three television networks.

Josh Mark, Halle Berry, Kenny Rogers and presidential nominees John McCain and Barack Obama were among those participating in "Stand Up to Cancer," an hour-long, commercial-free fundraising show spearheaded by entertainers-industry heavyweights whose lives have been touched by the disease.

STARS FOR OTHERS

"This is an absolutely historic night, thanks to the unbelievable generosity of the three networks," producers and cancer survivor Laura Ziskin told the audience at the Kodak Theatre before the show began, referring to ABC, NBC and CBS.

Patrick Swayze, Billy Crystal, Selma Hayek and Christina Applegate urged viewers to call in and donate, while Neil Patrick Harris, Anneliese Ferreira, Christina Ricci and Rosario Dawn answered phones. A visibly pregnant Jennifer Garner, along with Berry, Reese Witmaker and Casey deWitt, read personal accounts from those battling cancer.

AP

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1 CONGKAK
2 GRANDDANCERS
3 RIGHTEOUS KILL
4 BIG STAN
5 FOR THE FIRST TIME
6 BABYLON A.D.
7 DEATH RACE
8 IndieBreak: QUICKTRIP
9 IMAGINE ME and YOU
10 AY AYENG

ERMITA

1 GRAVEDANCERS
2 RIGHTEOUS KILL
3 CONGKAK
4 DEATH RACE
5 FOR THE FIRST TIME
6 BABYLON A.D.
7 BIG STAN
8 WALL-E
9 AY AYENG

METRO EAST

1 CONGKAK
2 RIGHTEOUS KILL
3 BABYLON A.D.
4 GRAVEDANCERS
5 DEATH RACE
6 FOR THE FIRST TIME
7 AY AYENG
8 BIG STAN

NOVALICHES

1 DEATH RACE
2 RIGHTEOUS KILL
3 BOY CULTURE
4 AY AYENG

PIONEER

1 DEATH RACE
2 RIGHTEOUS KILL
3 AY AYENG
4 BABYLON A.D.

STA. ROSA

1 CONGKAK
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 THE FLOOD
4 BABYLON A.D.

LIPA

1 FOR THE FIRST TIME
2 PERFECT CREATURE
3 CONGKAK
4 THE FLOOD

DASMARINAS

1 FOR THE FIRST TIME
2 ALTERED
3 JOURNEY to the CENTER of the EARTH
4 AY AYENG

IMUS

1 CONGKAK
2 RIGHTEOUS KILL
3 FOR THE FIRST TIME
4 AY AYENG

ANGELES

1 BABYLON A.D.
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 ROGUE
4 CONGKAK

STARMILLS

1 BABYLON A.D.
2 FOR THE FIRST TIME
3 DOBOL TROBOL
4 ROGUE
5 CONGKAK
6 ADAM and STEVE

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5 ADAM and STEVE
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Gabby goes for basics

OUT OF THE CLOSET

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Nikko Jose Chinco

"IF I DON'T HAVE ANYTIME to pick my clothes for me, I just go with the 'basics,'" said actor Gabby Concepcion, who is struggling with color blindness.

It is also called color vision deficiency, the inability to perceive differences between some colors that other people can easily tell apart.

Gabby said he underwent a medical test to determine the handicap. "I was made to look at templates with multiple dots that had numbers in them. A person like me, who cannot see greens and reds, will not see the numbers. That's how the doctor knew I was color blind."

He continued: "This is why white pants and blue jeans are the safest for me. I can match them with anything. The right color combination can really enhance a person's look."

BOTTOMS

My wife Gladys ordered the same tags for my pants shortly after I started taping for "Sin Fe Lantang." The clothes of the cast members sometimes get mixed up. We don't know who owns which item anymore.

It's hard to get the perfect fit for jeans. Sometimes, the hem is too long, so [pops] pressers cut it.

My goal is to fit into a size 30. I wore 34s when I first arrived here. I now wear a size 32— after weeks of playing badminton.

FOOTWEAR

Most of my shoes are still in the States. They're mostly square ones. The ones I have here are all new ones because pointed shoes are in fashion now.

I like loafers and sneakers. Choosing what to wear between shoes really depends on where I'm going. Like if I'd go on a road trip, I use my Geox shoes driving shoes.

I'm a size 10, sometimes 10 ½. Like most Filipinos, reshaped my pair for. When I buy shoes, I make sure I walk in them first. I'm very meticulous. I consider the quality of the leather and the design. Those things reflect the kind of personality you have.

This black leather pair is one of the most comfortable pairs that I have. The sole is from Nike, but this is really a Cole Haan. This is a byproduct of the recent merging of the two brands.

I take very good care of my shoes. I have leather conditioner applied on them. I make sure they are clean before they go inside the closet. Upon waking pairs. All of them have shoe horns, too. This is so the shoes will not get deformed. The horns are made from cider wood, which takes away the smell.

HE'S "crazy" about timepieces, among them this Rolex watch that looks like his late dad's.

BELT

Belts, like jewelry, are very important accents. I've had this brown Hamilton belt for a long time. I use it when I go riding. [horses].

HE likes "detailed loops in solid colors." Brights are fine, but "never loud." A fashion tip, "Look for distinctive creations."

SUITS

I like the fit of the suit I got from Zara Man. I first wore it on the set of "Sin Fe Lantang." It's [un]surprised in Zara Man, you can have your suit altered to your specifications.

My other favorite suit is by Rajo Laurel. I like it because it's black and long. It has an even longer runway run that's colored gray. I wore it at my Music Museum show. It has a matching [sleeved] polo shirt.

TOPS

I prefer detailed tops in solid colors. [A M] Clothing, which provides most of my sports shirts, have really interesting designs. The shirts are bright-colored but are sweet head. In picking your tops, you should look for accents that you cannot see in other shirts — they are mostly in buttons, sleeves or at the hems.

HE takes very good care of his shoes, most of them Cole Haan and Fye Iguinto.

JEWELRY

I'm crazy about watches [shows the Rolex timepiece on his left wrist]. My current favorite is rare-toned and has a black face. It's a dive watch. I love to dive. This watch is similar to the one my late dad had. He died many years ago. [It is] precious to me [a] watch [that] I bought my own [maybe].

E-mail: mcruz@inquirer.com.ph

HIS goal is to fit into a size 30.

COLOR vision deficiency does not keep Gabby from wearing fashionable clothes.

THIS suit from Zara Man is one of his top two favorites. The other one is by Rajo Laurel.

Kissing craze

WHETHER IT'S WITH A somebody's toes on the forehead, affectionate pecks on the cheek, or an adventurous undercover frolicking at Ayia Napa (from upper left, clockwise) actors Adrien Brody (R) and Mark Wahlberg at the "Brothers Bloom" screening; Angie, 9, at the 33rd Toronto International Film Festival; actress Jessica Biel kissing and actress Jessica Alba (R) and Wilmer Valderrama at the 2003 premiere of the TV series "Dirty Sexy Money." Angie, 8 in Los Angeles, CA, personality Simone Susinna and publicist Jennifer Allen at the 33rd Toronto International Film Festival; actor Mickey Rourke (R), and director Darren Aronofsky before the screening of "The Wrestler," Angie, 8 at the 33rd Toronto International Film Festival; actor Ben Affleck and producer Donald Kushner [R] and Jill Blair Baldwin at the 2003 premiere of the TV series "Dirty Sexy Money." Angie, 8 in Los Angeles, CA, personality Simone Susinna and publicist Jennifer Allen [R] and Angie, 8, a fashion show for Cosmopolitan magazine, Angie, 8, in Sydney.